



“Sometimes a clear and simple joy”

Friendship



Two years ago, Agnesians from all over the world gathered in Las Vegas to reconnect with former classmates and schoolmates. The event, "Karibokan 2003", was the first ever grand reunion of Agnesians living abroad. The reunion was, to say the least, a resounding success. Lost friends were found. Old friendships that have endured since the childhood days at St. Agnes, were rekindled anew. The fellowship and camaraderie that everyone experienced amid the celebrations and outings were so unforgettable that they served as an inspiration for many of the attendees to come home to Albay to further nourish old friendships that, for a while, seemed to have been set aside as everyone went about the business of raising a family or keeping a job.

The Las Vegas reunion gave birth to "Balik Ogma 2005", a homecoming that is part of a bigger homecoming. It promises to re-live and share the magical moments in Las Vegas with the bigger community of schoolmates in the Philippines.

Hoping to memorialize the SAA homecoming of 2005 and the grand and mini reunions that come with it, a group of friends launched a "Friendship Book", which aims to capture heart-warming memories both of the past and those yet to unfold. While it is always a challenge to launch a book of this nature, requiring as it does the contributions of many people, the effort that has been put into compiling it has proved to be worthwhile.

So here it is, this book, a compilation of Agnesians' thoughts on friendship, a tangible thing we can bring home, something we can hold on to after the events, after the last hugs and the last good-byes. Perhaps, in the far future when senses begin to fail, it will help us to remember not just the events, though those too are important, but more so, the people - our friends - who have given so much meaning to our lives. .

Because we are friends, this book is for you.



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Thanks - *Mila Alvarez Magno and Alexis Munoz Dasig*

BONITA HOLIDAY

(The tour bus shuddered to a final stop.

Before we could get down, an admiring throng of tour mates surrounded us,
marveling at the choreographed movements of our friendship.

When one is hungry the other is too,

When one wants a drink, the other is thirsty also.

When one sleeps, the other nods off in rhythmic coordination.

This is friendship in action and this is but a prelude.

To the BONITA HOLIDAY.

Onward, forward and no turning backward

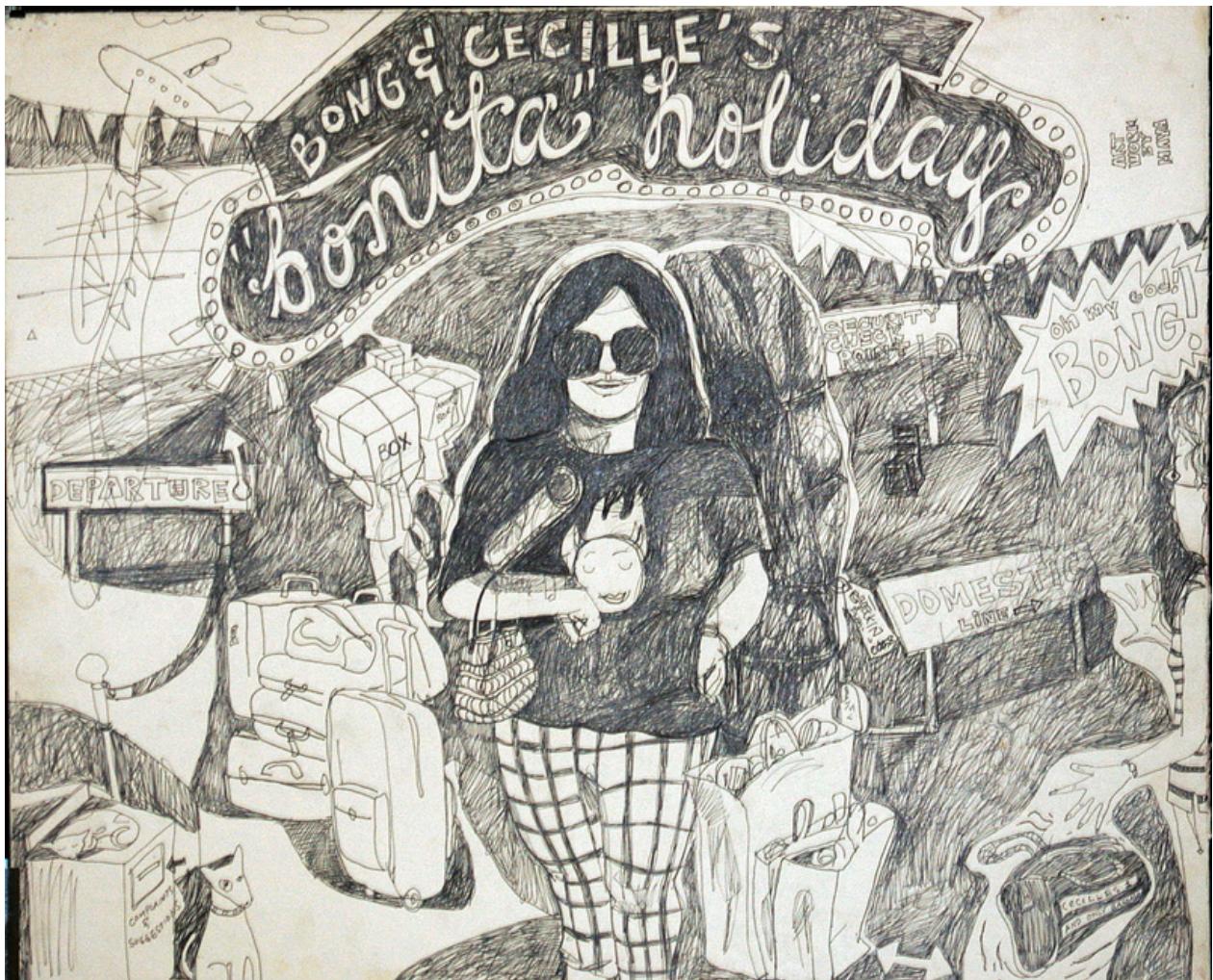
Bong and Cecille on the road to nowhere, anywhere, somewhere.

They're off to Legaspi for the funfare!).

It is said the past is another country and you can never go back; but not for a true-bloodied Agnesian. She goes back and discovers that the past is not another country, but a continuity. Whenever you go back it heralds a new beginning and not the end. When you confront the past you feel the connecting and not the cutting of ties, ties rooted in sharing, togetherness and that very special feeling that binds us all: FRIENDSHIP.

The road to renewed friendship leads to a planet called St. Agnes' Academy. You can approach it in Escada shades - the better to hide the onset of crow feet and to camouflage the nonchalant 'what am I doing here?' stance or you can run to it with open arms, singing a la Maria Von Trapp and all the hills in your life will be filled with the beautiful sound of yesteryears, well, not necessarily the music that Sister Annunciata drilled in our heads (Wan, Zu, Zhree...AND!). Let's not forget, singing will bring us nowhere if we don't have luggage and luggage to throw in all those memories.

Luggage filled with sesame-sprinkled pili nuts, trustworthy abaca tote bags, oily empanadas filled with the cook's imagination, gleaming bolos and knives from Cagsawa (if you're lucky to get them past airport security), clay chimes from Tiwi that have a mournful way of reminding their owner of her friends "hain na sinda?" and the wriggling crabs classified into three genders. Herein lies the tale of the crabs that got away ... As I lay dozing in the plane, I heard a voice: "Attention plez, attention plez," the pilot's sing-song was barely heard by the near-comatose passengers who paid no heed even with the mangled pronunciation thrown in. "There are crabs crawling all over the place" ... (with a slight hint of triumph in his voice). One of them has pinched the thigh of a stewardess". The second part of the announcement turned the passengers into a tizzy especially the ones wearing mini skirts. Those who were not, were stirred by the desire to watch such spectacle; when he screamed "Aguuuy, Aguuuy!", you know that one of the crabs hit the mark, and there was the instant discovery that you have placed your life's destiny in the hands of a Bisaya. Cecile looked at Bonita with an "I told you so" look. Just then the pilot, recovering slightly from the shock of the right-on-target bite, was on again, "Will the owner please stand up and claim these crabs? Any unnecessary delay and we shall throw the crabs along with the owner, into the Pacific Ocean." A collective gasp from the passengers...Quelle Horror! There was a crucial moment of fear and hesitation in the part of the owner but decided to stand up anyway. But before she could do so, her seatmate had to stand up first to give way to the former, given her girth. The moment Cecile stood up before even



Bonita could untie her seatbelt, the irate passengers who had crabs crawling all over them, pounced on the hapless woman and threw her along with Bonita's crabs into the Pacific. But the tale has a happy ending. News has come to us that Cecile survived and the experience has so enchanted her that she goes on a yearly trek to Boracay or barring that, goes for adventurous jaunts that include crossing the Mekong River. In honor of her friend who took the blows on her behalf, Bonita never ate crabs again but sometimes she gets tempted to eat the pesky crustaceans... And then, she woke up, thank God, it was just a dream! Now she is looking forward to eating crabs cooked in gata and malunggay in the next visit to Legaspi for the yearly reunion, where she and the yearly trekkies when the time comes to say farewell, find themselves making the promise - depending on age - a resounding MacArthurian "I SHALL RETURN" or in Guv Arnold Schwazenegger's Austrian-accented "I'LL BE BACK". Coming back is the desire to see oneself in the present in the light of the past.

Bonita Arevalo Medrano

Cecile Manalac (HS'63)

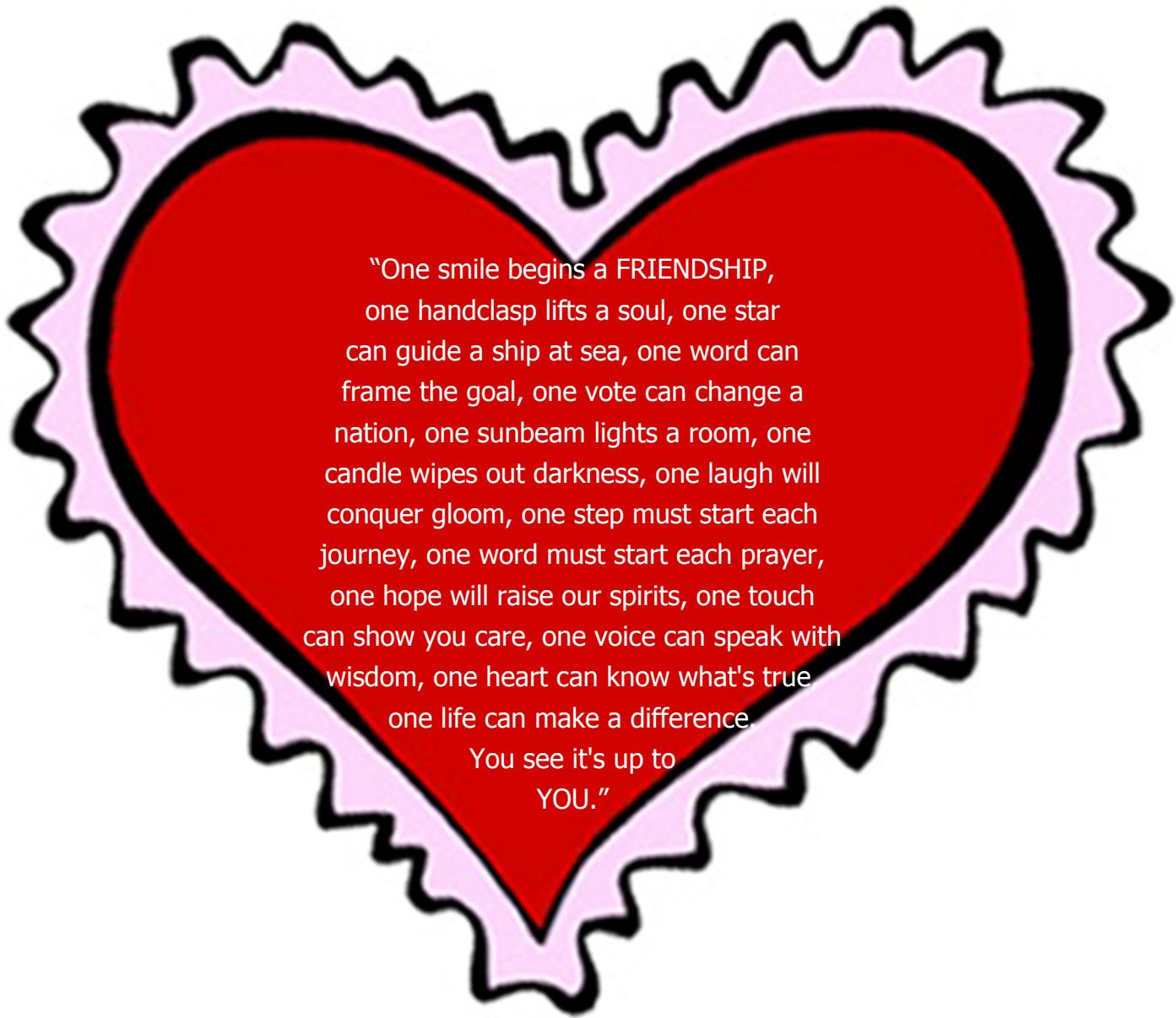
I was 11 in 1959, and our family lived in Bulan, a small, sleepy town in the province of Sorsogon. I remember happily wandering through that summer, my friends and I, looking forward to being high school freshmen. There was no indication during those carefree summer excursions, that my simple, serene life was about to change. My parents had decided it was time for me to go to school in Legaspi.

For the first time ever in my young life, I was going away from my family. I remember, clearly, walking through the SAA gate that first day, and thinking how impossibly large the school was, everything in Bulan having been small and insignificant compared to this larger- than-life institution that was about to swallow me whole. I was a fish out of water, scared and homesick already, wishing to be back home with friends, totally disoriented, and with nobody but an older cousin Mely to call my own.

I did not bring much with me. We had been given a short list of things for “internas,” and there was really only a small closet, adjacent to the beds, where we could lock all our worldly goods away. There were privacy curtains around the beds for dressing and mosquito nets to keep the bugs out. The windows opened wide to the garden, and I remember looking out on moonlit nights wishing for home. Things soon changed. I grew up and made friends. And soon, the moonlight meant evening walks after supper in the backyard of the school with new friends to share confidences. These friendships would last a lifetime.

And so, for me...

- ♥ Friendship is having a bedmate, **Henrietta Fajardo**, who would tell me stories with such enthusiasm, it made me laugh. I met Henrietta again in Oakland, California, Oct. '03.
- ♥ Friendship is spending time with **Bong Arevalo-Medrano** at several shows; “Electile Dysfunction” and “Menopause” at Music Museum, Russell Watson at PICC. We fortified ourselves with lots of snacks.
- ♥ Friendship is **Mary Ann Pineda-Reynoso's** invitation to spend Christmas Eve '04 with her family and then, my bringing home armfuls of delicious food.
- ♥ Friendship is talking to **Chita Vallejo-Pijano** who has all the answers: “I will handle and take care of it”.



"One smile begins a FRIENDSHIP,
one handclasp lifts a soul, one star
can guide a ship at sea, one word can
frame the goal, one vote can change a
nation, one sunbeam lights a room, one candle
wipes out darkness, one laugh will
conquer gloom, one step must start each
journey, one word must start each prayer,
one hope will raise our spirits, one touch
can show you care, one voice can speak with
wisdom, one heart can know what's true,
one life can make a difference.
You see it's up to
YOU."

*"True friendship is
Seen through the heart
Not through the eyes."*

*"Friendship is love
With understanding."*

Submitted by Bonita Arevalo Medrano



Beyond Time and Season

You nursed and bathed me with the purest of love. You enveloped me in your care. Clothed me with your own skin. With the sweetest of lullabies, you cradled me in your arms from dawn to midnight. Selflessly and without condition, you embraced my life as your own. In a thousand and one ways, I knew you were the only friend I could count on forever, my ever-dearest mother.

In fair or foul weather, you were my steadfast ally. You chased rainbows and butterflies, gathered moonbeams and stardust with me. Silently you shared my little dreams and dried my tiny tears. With your softness, you comforted and cuddled me and with your warmth, quieted my fears. You were my playmate in the sun, my pillow at night. You were teddy bear and buddy I hugged in the childhood of my past.

Then came the gentlest of springs. Like flowers we bloomed and wove daisy chains and daydreams. Through giggles and tickles, we sighed over puppy loves and pimples. Hand in hand we outlived pet peeves and ugly braces. Eagerly we tried one face after another, looking for a face of our own unlike any other. In that sweet season of joy and wonder, you were the bosom friend of my youth, my favorite classmate in the never-ending school of life.

One lavish summer, I came upon you once again. Together we built sand castles in the sun and castles in the air. Foolishly we painted the skies and whispered secret wishes to the stars. Exploring wider horizons, we sought guidance from enduring constellations above. Side by side we set out in search of a name and our place in the sun, charting a voyage that survived the shifting tides of time. In the sea of life, you were my fellow traveler and fiend who never left the safe haven of my heart.

In a timeless season you came along unexpectedly and without reason. Together we laughed and cried in each other's arms, dancing to a bittersweet refrain in our hearts. We gave of ourselves to one another, and with each other, pursued one tender dream and wild desire. Pain and pleasure, we intimately shared, finding what was most dear and enduring beyond any measure. We trekked lonely deserts and forlorn lands, reveled in rich valleys and sipped dark sweet wine. In you and within you I found a lifelong partner and friend, a love I would cherish beyond time and season.

With a most grateful heart,
Joy Alvarado

LOOKING BACK

Our GIRLHOOD DREAMS have ripened,
And we've learned a thing or two
From HOPES we've seen fulfilled,
Assorted TROUBLES we've been through ...
We're looking back astonished
At how fast the YEARS HAVE FLOWN,
How much we've done,
How far we've come,
How --well-- MATURE we've grown.
Our lives have many stories-
Countless MEMORIES remain
To touch us once again with JOY
And TENDERNESS and PAIN.
And still, we look ahead with HOPE,
For as the years unfold,
There is no limit to the DREAMS
A WOMAN'S HEART can hold.

Submitted by Bonita Arevalo Medrano
Taken from a Hallmark Greeting card

Finding Home in SAA Friendships

by **Marie “Tinsel” Bismonte**

SAA Elementary Class of 1986

7 January 2005

Somewhere in the groove of my being is a space kept for a particular group of people, *the Agnesians*. It is a continuing memory that is alive, an entity on its own. It ages with the progression of time and grows as days add up into months and years, summing up to a collection of decades that make up a lifetime. I call this particular space a remembered country I often visit. It is not a building or a structure, neither the past nor the future. More than a location, it is an emotional coordinate I often refer and come back to – a home I visit once every often.

At the risk of sounding banal, I have read once that the word “friend” really means “lover”. Tracing the origin of the word back to its Latin, Greek, Germanic and English roots, to be a friend or to have one means to love or be loved. More than the lower-level meaning of friendship often characterized by casual acquaintances and fun-sharing, Agnesian friendships are warm much like what love really is, for how can people know each other since five years old and not feel such meaningful closeness. Even in the complexity that often surrounds the concept, love marks this shared history, from the point of its foundation to the branching off into varied futures.

Perhaps, most importantly, with love comes acceptance.

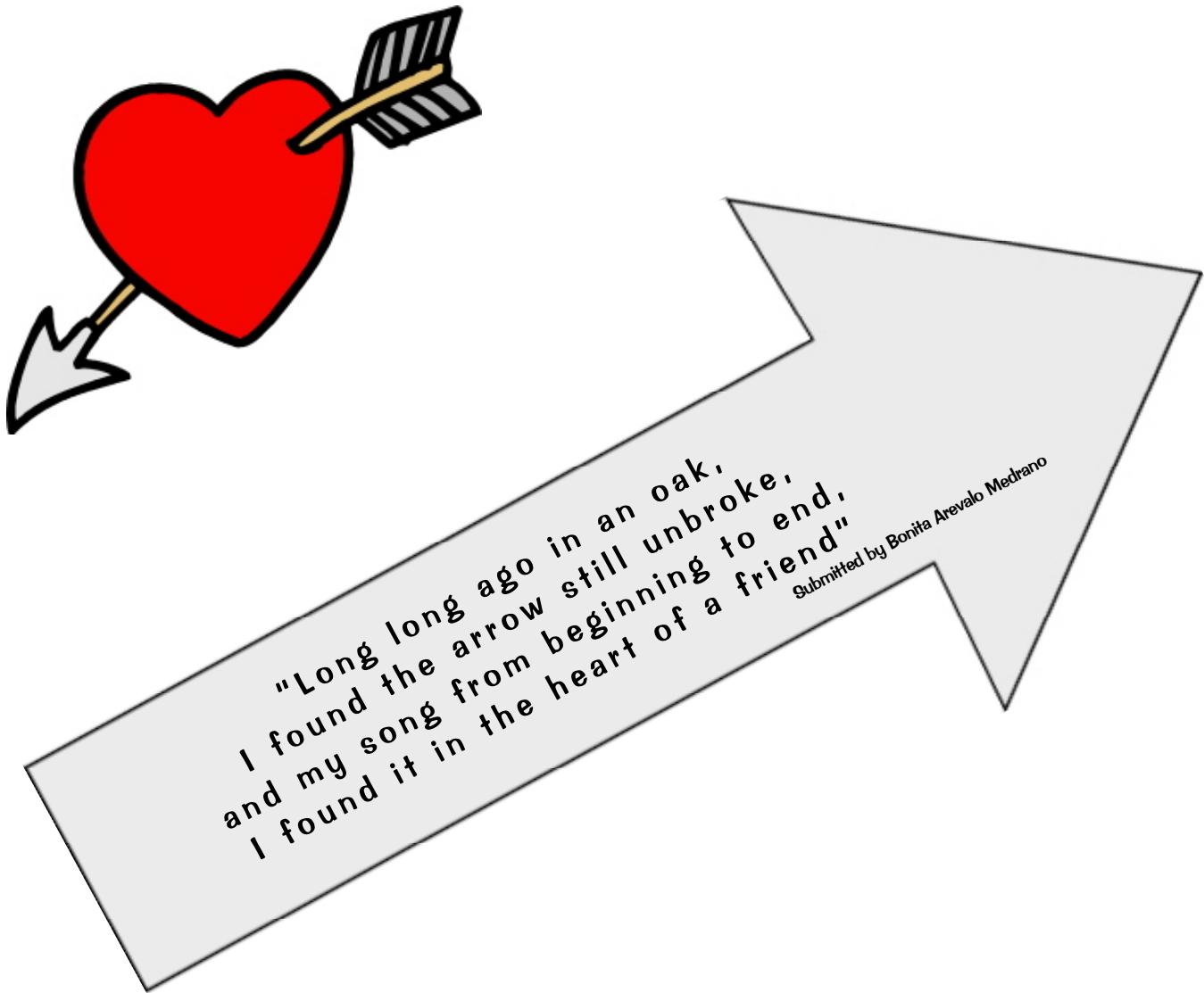
I was halfway through my first year in high school at St. Agnes’ Academy when I left for the U.S. While I continued with my formative years in New York, there was a life that I used to be a part of and cut off from, which persisted in my absence. During those years, friendships were solidified, paths taken and decisions made, simultaneously but on different grounds. However, there was an enduring effort to remain in contact, mostly through letters at that time. Through changes, we have all grown into our potentials. I, running a parallel road, have grown into the person that I am now. It would take many years before I see them, one or a few at a time at different occasions.

Every time an opportunity arises whereupon some or most of us are brought together in one place, an element of bonding occurs and unfailingly so. It is quite curious how distinctly different personalities can make each other feel a sense of belonging. It does not matter whether we happen to be the best of friends growing up or childhood enemies at one point, but there remains a marked ambience of comfort that only we can give one another, but most of the time, it is given to me.

Leaving St. Agnes at the onset of my teenage years, I have always considered myself the “outsider”, always in the alternative when it comes to choices, opinions, experiences and beliefs. Maybe one can even go as far as saying that I am the “crazy classmate” for unlike many who have followed a more direct course towards a somewhat, if not firm, stable life, I have not. With this said, there have been times when I find myself looking in to a world that flourished without me.

Yet at the same time, when I am with them, it is a world of faces and memories that allows me in the present moment to retrieve what I had missed in the past and eventually become a part of, regardless of how different I am. At this particular juncture, something in me is transformed; I become an Agnesian again. It is as if no years have been lost, no miles have intervened and no gaps need to be filled. There is only a completion of a circle, my being. Indeed, the prodigal daughter has come back. She is not to be judged, but more than that, she is to be received with open arms.

Every time Agnesians get together, there is always a feeling of absoluteness that stands outside of time for we are adults and children at the same time; at once playing in the playground while enjoying the uniqueness of our adult age. In this particular space, love and acceptance flourish and that, for me, is finding home.



THERE IS ALWAYS A PLACE FOR YOU

There is always a place for you at my table,
You never need to be invited.
I'll share every crust as long as I'm able,
And know you will be delighted.



There is always a place for you by my fire,
And though it may burn to embers,
If warmth and good cheer are your desire
The friend of your heart remembers!

There is always a place for you by my side,
And should the years tear us apart,
I will face lonely moments more satisfied
With a place for you in my heart!

-Anne Campbell

Submitted by Bonita Arevalo Medrano

On Friendship

(An excerpt from "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran)

And a youth said, Speak to us of Friendship.
And he answered, saying:

Your friend is your needs answered.
He is your field which you sow with love
and reap with thanksgiving.
And he is your board and your fireside.
For you come to him with your hunger,
And you seek him for peace.

When your friend speaks his mind you fear not
the "nay" in your own mind,
nor do you withhold the "ay."
And when he is silent your heart ceases
not to listen to his heart;
For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires,
all expectations are born and shared,
with joy that is unacclaimed.

When you part from your friend, you grieve not;
For that which you love most in him
may be clearer in his absence,
as the mountain to the climber
is clearer from the plain.

And let there be no purpose in friendship
save the deepening of the spirit.
For love that seeks aught but the disclosure
of its own mystery is not love but a net cast forth;
and only the unprofitable is caught.

And let your best be for your friend.
If he must know the ebb of your tide
Let him know its flood also, for what is your friend
that you should seek him with hours to kill?
Seek him always with hours to live.
For it is his to fill your need, but not your emptiness.
And in the sweetness of friendship
let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.
For in the dew of little things
the heart finds its morning and is refreshed

Submitted by Mila Alvarez Magno

We don't need to be a writer to write about friendship, but according to the wise words of Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"We take care of our health, we lay up money, we make our room tight, and our clothing sufficient, but who provides wisely that he shall not be wanting in the best property of all - friends."

True enough, we may be sufficient in almost every thing which money can buy, yet, not everyone can possess the best property one can ever have. That is, the gift of friendship, in the real sense of the word. This can only come from a true friend who steps into our life when the whole world steps out.

Many people come and go out of our lives each day but only a selected few of special people called friends are left to understand who we are, where we have been, accept who we have become, and still invite us to grow as persons.

Friendship is indeed a treasure to cherish. It must be kept in constant repair. It is just like a horizon which expands whenever we approach it. We have to make new acquaintances as we advance though life so that we will not be left alone.

Cherishing friendship needs care. It must be enriched by the spirit of giving and sharing. It should be nurtured well enough to be able to bridge the gap between what things are and what they could be. It should exist where people harmonize in their view of things. It should fortify life knowing that to love and be loved are the greatest happiness we can ever experience with friends.

It is said that the foundation for quality friendships lies in the belief that when we meet the needs of other people, our needs will be met. What we give, we get; what we send, comes back; and what we sow, we reap. This is why when we make a commitment to do everything in our power to help others fulfill the desires of their hearts, our desires will also be met.

Friendship, therefore, makes prosperity more shining and lessens adversity by dividing and sharing it. It has to be cherished. For life according to Cicero: "is nothing without friendship."

Arlene R. Gojo
SAA HS Class 1953

The Wonder of Friendship

Imelda M. Crisol -Roces

James B. Reuter writes about a family who was celebrating Valentine's Day. All the children in the household wrote letters to their Mommy and Daddy. What touched Mom and Dad the most was the letter from the youngest, a 7-year old. As they opened the envelope, two paper hearts fell out. The paper hearts had been painstakingly colored red by their child. He wrote:

"Dear Mommy and Daddy,

*I would like to give more than this,
but I don't have any money."*

The mother and father wept because their youngest son was deaf and dumb.

The type of thoughtfulness exhibited by this child is what makes friendship a true friendship. Genuine friendship is not a mere emotional fascination, not a blind passion, not a companionship of mere convenience.

Gerald Kelly, well known and much appreciated in the field of Morals, drawing on the material of psychologists and theologians, has presented three qualities that are essential to the concept of friendship:

- It is morally helpful to both parties
- There is a genuine basis of agreement
- There is a spirit of self-sacrifice

Friendship tends to influence both parties. Care should therefore be taken to make sure that friendship does not lead to a lowering of ideals, to troubles of conscience, neglect in the practice of one's religious duties, a weakening of one's faith, and a life of sin. True friendship seeks the good of the other and this good is never found in sin. A true friend does not say to the other, "You are my friend, so let's go to hell together." This is a contradiction in terms. The commandment "to love one's neighbor" does not include nurturing a friendship

True friendship is a many-splendored thing for it provides mutual sympathy, encouragement, helpful advice, inspiration, and the sharing of joy and sorrow. However, the basis of agreement and empathy should be genuine, not artificial. For example, experience shows that a mere fascination prompts one to like what the other likes, but he knows this is not his normal attitude and realizes that it cannot last.

A genuine agreement and empathy enable both parties to work together in harmony, to have wholesome agreement on fundamentals, such as matters of conscience, Creed, Moral Code and Method of Worship, and compromise on the accidentals, the lesser things, like how to spend the evening, how to decorate a room, differing opinions, and others. It goes without saying that difference of opinion and taste should even be an occasion for enjoyable mental contact.

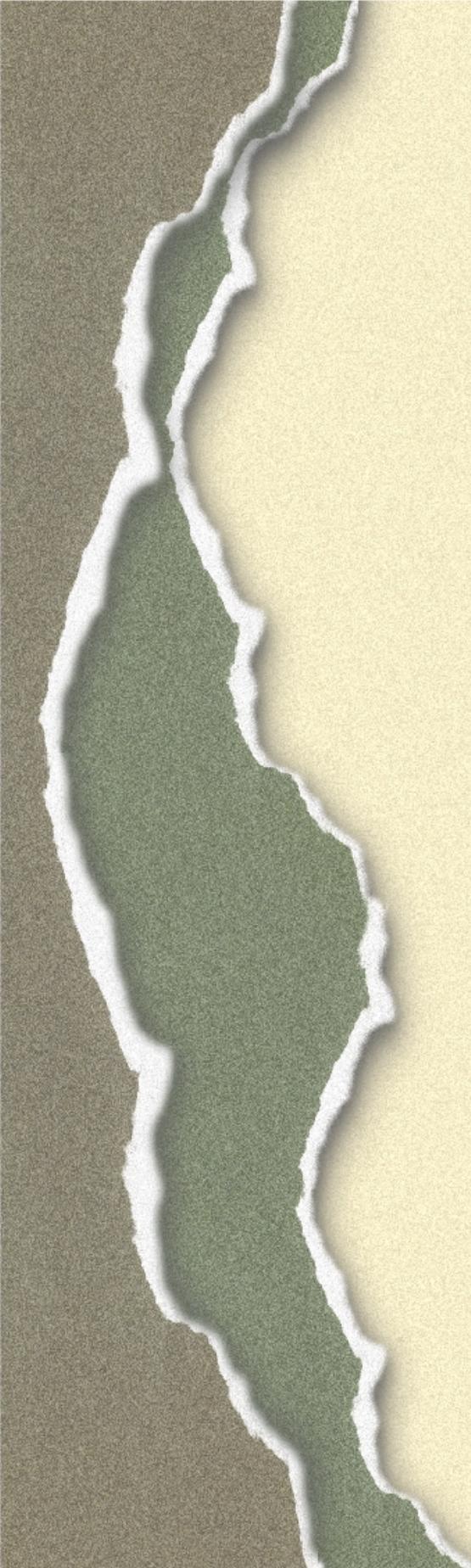
True friendship is a giving of one's best to the other. Ignatius of Loyola had two simple signs of genuine friendship:

It shows by deeds, not just words
When one has good things, he tends to share them with the other.

This showing “by deeds” can be concretized in many ways, such as wholesome compromise (as earlier alluded to), tolerance for small defects (due to changing moods, these small defects may “get on one’s nerves”), veering our attention from suspicions and jealousies, lending one’s ear to the other’s troubles and joys, trying to understand each other..... In other words, true friendship is a perpetual and mutual self-giving. At the beginning, these little acts of thoughtfulness are easy, but the familiarity of friendship may at times blunt these little acts. But it is precisely these small things that can mean the rise and fall of a friendship. To borrow a phrase from Leo Trese, these are “tremendous trifles.”

We have all the while been speaking about the ideal that all friends should strive for. As in any ideal, it admits degrees of achievement. In the beginning, the degree of the qualities of friendship may be on a lower level, very imperfect. But it must be there to some degree, to serve as a point of departure for further improvement.

All of these details on the elements of friendship may seem multifarious and complex. Luckily, the Greatest Teacher of all has reduced all the tomes on friendship to one statement: “Do unto others, as you would have others do unto you.”



at the liquor store
tonite
the giants were ahead
 3-1, 1 out, 9th inning
...i am 16 again
on the streets, in the circle where i lived
the light is fading
and i just want one more turn at bat

i am 16
there is mike and chris
patrick following me around
fanny and rachel and zeni
 (before she died)
it was all the same summer
and we used a tennis ball and
the new bat chris got for his birthday
my gloves were too small
romel and charles
a summer before everything else
baseball and basketball, but mostly baseball

at the park- it was never the same as that street

...i bought my vodka/cran mixture
five dollars
and got my free ice

still
 3-1, 1 out

i head back to the studio
play some music
smoke a cigarette

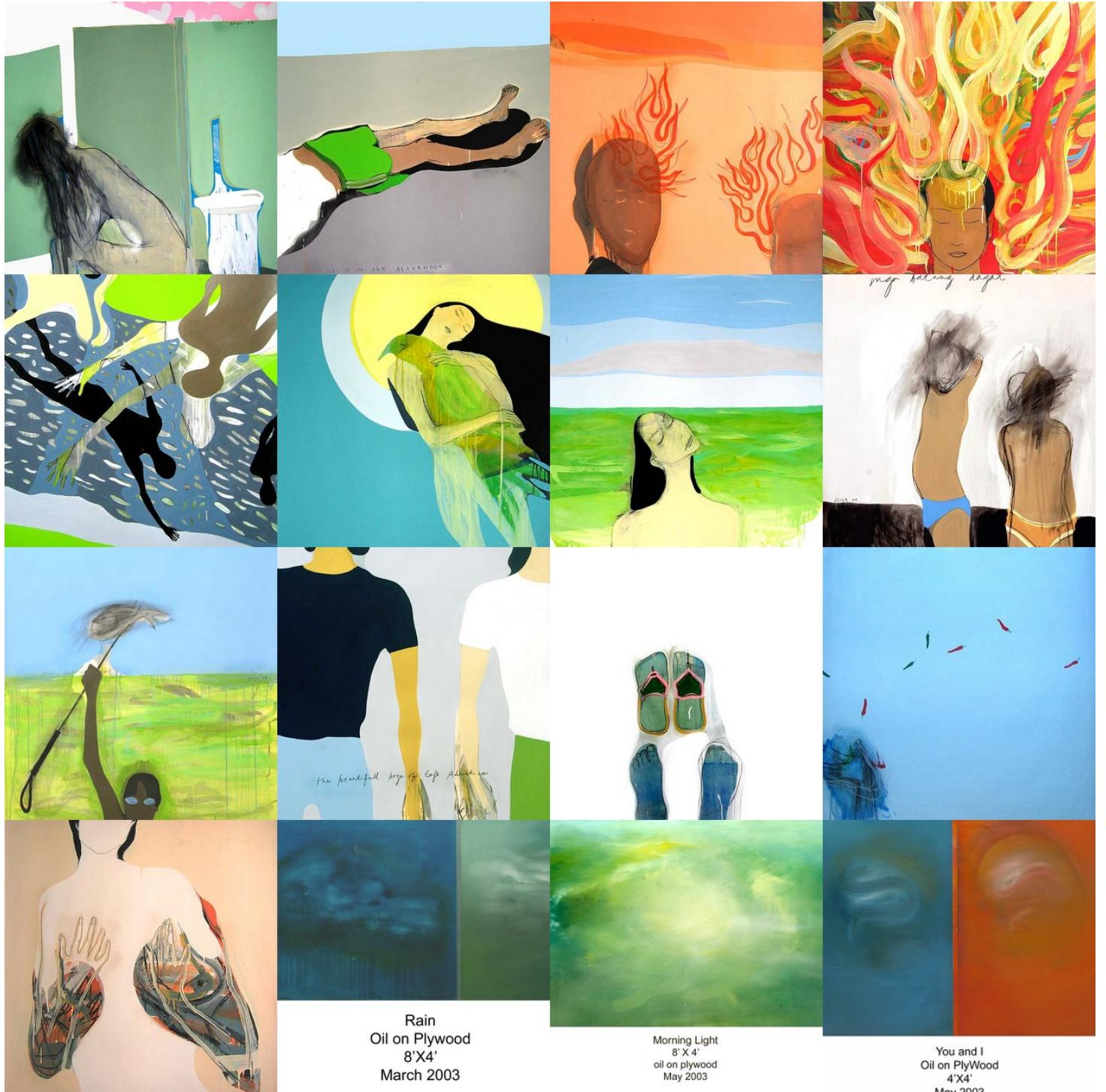
but i don't feel like music or painting

tonite
i just want to close my eyes and feel that way again

the only thought
the next thought
was making that connection
the sweetspot
that pause....
... before i run to first base
 (our neighbour's mailbox)
to second
 (the red carmengia parked just several yards down)
third base
 (the garbage can that never gets taken in)
... and back home

... home
i want to dream and dream of home
with these friends
long ago
in the dimming light of late summer
in that street...
on this couch
in this place
in my head.

Maya Munoz
Summer2002
the citadel, san jose ca.



maya munoz



*And now at last the dusk
that hushes heart*

and lifts up soul in prayer.

*The kind of vespers I have
sought for oh so long.*

It has been some time since you asked I join the many you thought should share some lines on friendship. **Because we're friends**, you said, maybe we each and all should pause and see what memory comes that makes us smile or cry that we not only have, but are -- the friends we claim to have and be. And with what we'd share of thought and picture, we hoped that in our reunion we would find -- in the pause between hellos and hi's, in the quiet beneath our dancing, laughter, song -- the meaning of the joy of love and friendship, togetherness and coming home. And in our parting, take along the thrill of edens found in friends or edens lost but found once more. Your inviting phrase became the title of our book; its name in turn, our loving bond. *Because we're friends*.

But time or mood I could not find – until tonight. Now strangely, suddenly, thankfully the evening sky reveals the stars, and in the stars your name and face and those of many of our -- friends. But we were not really "friends" were we? No. At least not from the start.

When we entered kindergarten, the five-and six-year olds that we were, who knew, much less understood friendship? For days and weeks since classes first began we were so scared – remember? – even just to lose sight of our mommies and yayas. But when Mrs. Bosch said we just had to let go, we reluctantly sat up straight but stole so many glances outside the classroom to see if our protectors were still there as they promised. In time, of course, the looking **out** graduated to looking **around**. Then only did we see ourselves -- frightened little kids finding comfort in one another.

But we were not yet really friends, were we? Just seatmates, classmates, schoolmates.

Even when we grew up and moved up the grades, with our teachers guiding us -- Sr. Hedwig, Miss Rempillo, Miss Ballares, Sr. Nicoleta, Sr Louise -- even when we started talking to each other, sharing or not sharing snacks and stories and laughter, putting our hands on the desks in silent attention or putting them wherever we fancied, we knew one another, but we were not really "friends".

Oh, of course each of us had a favorite chum, companion, pal. But can we say now, did we say then that we were "friends"? I suppose, not really.

When we, the 10 or 12 boys of our class had perforce to leave Santa Ines after grade school graduation and most of us transferred to Liceo de Albay for high school, we did have our jam sessions, didn't we, common and interchanging invitations to fiesta and birthday party dances. We were just together. We laughed and sang and danced together. Not all the time. But enough times. Still, we were not really "friends". Maybe we were. But the term was not often used, perhaps just presupposed.

And then we parted. For most of us, that high school graduation in 1963, you at SAA and we at Liceo, marked a more definitive splitting of our ways. Some of us, of course, would continue to be together – as college classmates – or would bump into each other here or there. But for most of us, it was just goodbye. Each to his or her own.

And so passed the years. Each of us doing what destiny brought us and where. Over ten years. Twenty. Thirty. Forty. Forty?!? Were we that "oooolddd"?

We were, indeed. Though we may not have wanted to admit it. Forty years since high school graduation. Ruby Anniversary. Rubilarians were we. And yet somehow in that oldish oldness, we found one another again. By phone, fax, internet.

And then, when finally, suddenly, strangely, thankfully we saw one another face to face after forty years, we knew, we just knew one another as though we had never parted at those 1963 dances of goodbye. We knew we were --- FRIENDS. Friends? Yes, friends.

O, just like that long ago time we did not define "friends" or "friendship", but somehow I think I knew we were. As with other things in life, what is true and deep does not need to be "defined". It is just there. You know it. You do not question it. So it was with us. Friends. That is what we were. That is what we are. Because that is what we were all those many years ago.

But now, unlike when we were little kids, we just reached out one to the other. With a little bit of shyness, of course, at the start, but soon also, with a certain kind of at-home-ness. There was that certain certitude that though for most of us we did not see or hear from one another for forty years, somehow we understood one another and accepted one another. And loved one another as only friends can and do.

There will, of course, always be different levels of friendship. No homecoming ever makes everybody friends at the same time, at the same pace, in the same depth, and all the time. We remain the humans that we are: sometimes together, many times apart, but always trying to reach out in love and prayer and friendship.

Because we are friends, we do. We do, because we are friends. And why are we friends? Because. Sometimes, just because.

And now we come together again. Balik-ogma we call our meeting. The happiness of our youth we remember and join with the joy of our present age. One story remembered, another created. Laughter released from deep within the heart. And echoed. Tears of joy well up, are dried, and flow again.

Who understands friendship? How understand friends? There will be definitions, examples, models, pictures, and songs. But really, in its depths, it is just there. You know it when it is there. Know it when it is gone. Like love. For friendship is love.

And oh, these twilight musings have transported me across the evening and the night sky, past the midnight stillness, down to the edge of morning. Funny how time flies or stands still when the heart is full. What happened? Was it one night, from dusk to dawn? Or was it just one long moment? Because one lifetime. Of friends.

I do not know. It matters not. I think of you dear friend, dear friends, and thank you. For the joy of our youth. The age of our friendship. The depth of our love. Balik-ogma.

And now at last, the dawn...

Girlfriends

to my friend, nenette, i would like to re-dedicate this poem
i sent you several years ago!

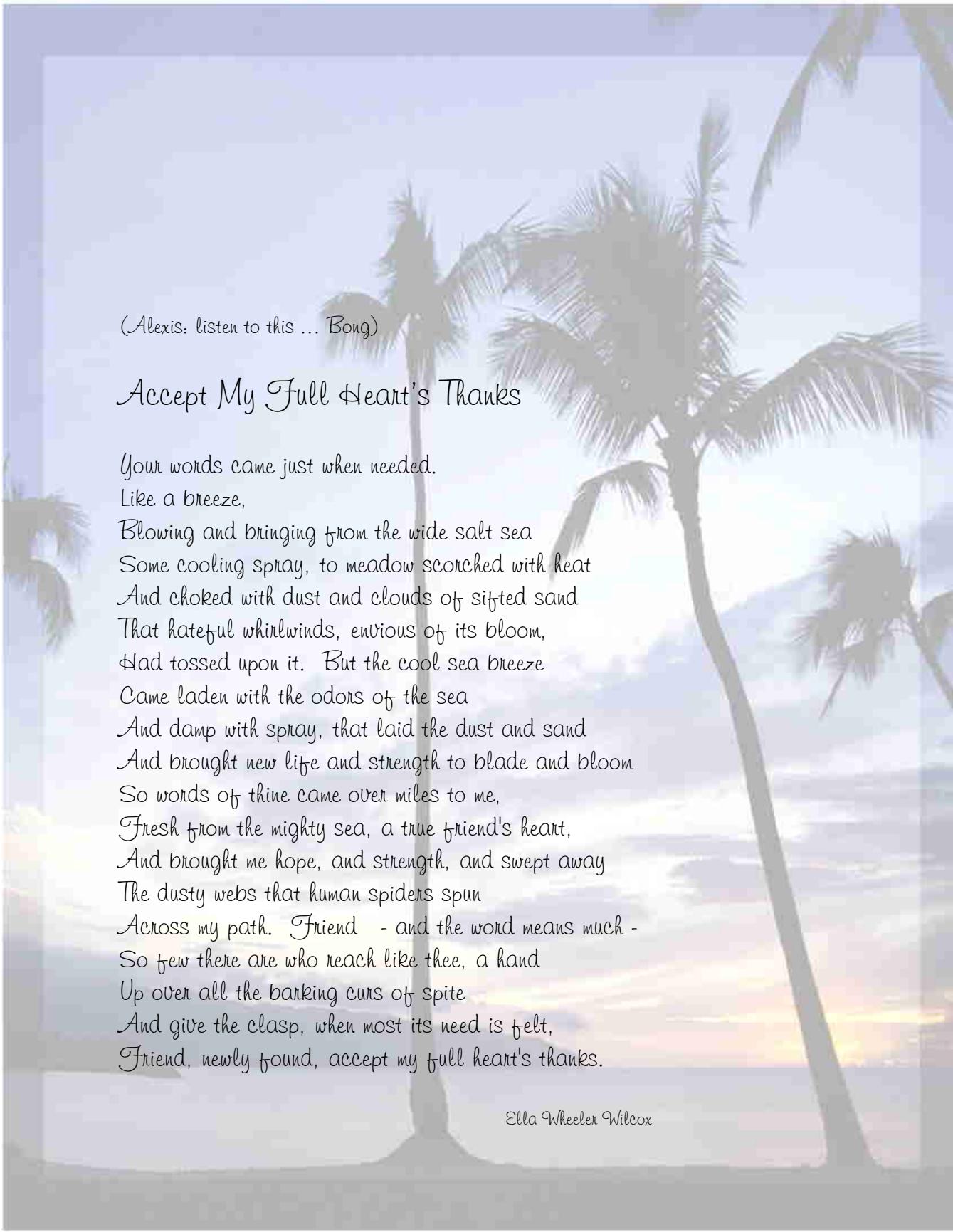
thank you for giving me unconditional love all these years
and for cherishing my hopes and being kind to my dreams!

jing lomeda valenciano

Remember the time I needed you
and you were there?
You could very well be asking yourself,
"Which time?"...and you'd be right.
You're the one I always turn to
when I need someone to lean on
because I know you'll accept me,
even when I'm not liking myself very much.
You're the one I trust
because I know you'll keep
what I share with you in confidence.
You're the one who is comfortable with my tears,
who has a way of listening behind the words
to draw out what's really bothering me.
And you never tell me what to do...
Instead you gently guide me
to a deeper understanding of myself...

So even if you don't remember
all the times
you've been there for me, I do.
And each time I remember them,
I'm thankful all over again
that life gave me
a good friend like you.

Renee Duvall



(Alexis: listen to this ... Bong)

Accept My Full Heart's Thanks

Your words came just when needed.
Like a breeze,
Blowing and bringing from the wide salt sea
Some cooling spray, to meadow scorched with heat
And choked with dust and clouds of sifted sand
That hateful whirlwinds, envious of its bloom,
Had tossed upon it. But the cool sea breeze
Came laden with the odors of the sea
And damp with spray, that laid the dust and sand
And brought new life and strength to blade and bloom
So words of thine came over miles to me,
Fresh from the mighty sea, a true friend's heart,
And brought me hope, and strength, and swept away
The dusty webs that human spiders spun
Across my path. Friend - and the word means much -
So few there are who reach like thee, a hand
Up over all the barking curs of spite
And give the clasp, when most its need is felt,
Friend, newly found, accept my full heart's thanks.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

I LOVE YOU

I love you,
Not only for what you are
But for what I am
When I am with you.
I love you
Not only for what
You have made of yourself
But for what
You are making of me.
I love you
For the part of me
That you bring out;
I love you
For putting your hand
Into my heaped-up heart
And passing over
All the foolish, weak things
That you can't help
Dimly seeing there,
And for drawing out
Into the light
All the beautiful belongings
That no one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.
I love you because you
Are helping me to make

Of the lumber of my life
Not a tavern
But a temple,
Out of works
Of my every day
Not a reproach
But a song.
I love you
Because you have done
More than any creed
Could have done
To make me good,
And more than any fate
Could have done
To make me happy.
You have done it
Without a touch,
Without a word,
Without a sign.
You have done it
By being yourself.
Perhaps that is what
Being a **friend** means,
After all.

Roy Croft

For JING AND CORA,

No ifs, no buts. I love you both. Thank you for everything.

Love,
Nenette

When I was going through a very rough patch in my life, **Mely Nicolas** sent me a book, The Good Earth by Pearl Buck with a dedication now enshrined in my memory. Although I can no longer remember if this was part of a quote or straight from Mely's heart I can still quote the lines verbatim after all these years.

"...Oh for the comfort of feeling safe with a friend
Having neither to weigh thoughts nor words
But pouring them all out - chaff and grain together
Knowing that a faithful hand will sift them
And with the breath of kindness blow the rest away..."

I feel this embodies the essence of the friendships forged at SAA, or formed, reunited and strengthened by cyberlink transcending geographical boundaries and age.

Submitted by Rosella Aquende (HS'61)

To **Leilani Roslin** (HS'61)

Thanks Lani for the beautiful gift of friendship. Reconnected after 38 years, in 1998. you traveled from Canada to London just to say hello and fill in each other of what has happened to our lives after leaving SAA. And what did I do? Malang supog baga ta ginibo kang in charge sa BBQ! imbis na royal treatment..ta sleep over party kan youngest ko!

Roselle

Dear **Ellen**, (HS66)

You are such a special person . You are a joy to be with. I am constantly amazed at your attitude towards life. And I am humbled when I think of the way you have handled "life's kinks" with so much faith in God.

I hope you know that you are a very important person in my life. I like being and spending time with you. Let's do it more often.

Love,
Nenette (HS 65)

To my dearest Prime, **Nette** and **Jing**: Try to find more time in your life. Do it just for you. The people you love and care about will be rewarded with your happiness, too. Make the most of every day and celebrate all that you are. Thank you for treating me so special. " YOU'RE THE BEST!!! MALA KABOOT NINDONG TOLO, SALUDO AKO" Primay

Submitted by Ellen Estevez Mesias

Dearest **Lita (Gapayao)**,

I am always happy to see you when I come home. Your quiet ways remind me that my childhood is not lost. As neighbors we shared mutual memories of tall bamboo trees swaying in the wind, the same view of Mayon, the same river in the backyard. Sometimes I long for those straightforward days, playing in the river included, trying to catch those shrimps living in old rusted cans.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

Jing, because of you, thru the cybernet, I have found renewed friendship with our dear pinangatugangs. You initiated the get-togethers, mini reunions, grand reunions, etc, and for that, you will always be remembered and treasured.

Nenette, thanks for your loyalty as a great friend; for making things happen when we didn't think they would; for being there when we needed you; and thanks for being a sounding board when things go wrong.

Totie, I cherish your craziness, you make me laugh and forget the day's struggle. Thanks.

To all my pinangatugangs, a big toast to friendship!

Cora Tuanqui (HS'65)



Hello, I'm Miling Pardo and even if I cannot attend the BALIK OGMA O5 event nor the SAA homecoming in May, 2005, much as I would love too, specially since my sister **Tamen** will be celebrating as a GOLDEN GIRL. I am sending a message for the friendship book which I think is a great idea. Don't forget to send me my copy.

"Also I want to send all my love to my dear classmates, hoping they still remember me. I'm lucky because when I cut-off my classes to come to Spain in 1957 I had to repeat, therefore, I have two groups of classmates, that is Class'59 and Class'60

A special mention is for my very dear **Loida Nicolas**, she has visited me twice in Spain, we had wonderful moments together and Loida, hope to see you again, in Spain.

Likewise, I would like to hear something about a very dear friend I always remember, we were members of a gang and had wonderful moments and lots of fun. Are you there **Irma Esquivel** "Inday"? If you read this please do contact me through Tamen my wonderful sister, "the best".

My autograph book is my treasure which I keep very near my heart. Once in a while I read it and fly back to St. Agnes' days where we had wonderful times together. Needless to say I love you all, and because of this I cannot choose one or two messages for the book, so instead I am sending what I wrote to all of you, before you come to Spain. I love you all.

Dearest Friends. I invite you all to write in my book of memories. I hope that you'll enjoy in doing so!!! Be all sure that I will never forget any of you wonderful people.

Loving you,
Miling



For my classmates (Class '62)

A big hug to **Rosie Los Baños**, to **Evelyn Locsin** and to the rest of my classmates. All I can say is I had a wonderful time in SAA. I am a granny now; I have 3 grandchildren, but when I think of SAA I return to my childhood days.

To all of you, all my love and I hope you remember me always.

Nena Pardo



I AM THE YOUNGEST OF THE PARDO SISTERS

I too want to send my class a greeting from the bottom of my heart. I would have graduated in Class '67. My classmates were **Ditas Los Baños**, **Mita Velasco**, **Angelita Matias** and **Angelita Arroyo**. Which one of you was called "ANGELICA"? I hope at least one of you remembers me.

To all of you my very best regards.

Marilu Pardo

If Nena does not remember, I am younger so I remember less. But I had good friends like **Ditas Los Baños** who was my mom's godchild. Do you remember, Dits? Also I recall **Mari Velasco**, but she was older not in our class and yes, I remember "ANGELICA". Will you tell me something about her? Ako bako pang Lola.

Love you all my dear Agnesians.

Marilu Pardo



Even if I only went to kindergarten, with **Mrs. Bosch** I too went to SAA. My mom says I am the last of the Pardo Clan to study in SAA.

Don't know which class would I have graduated with but I want you all to know I wore the St. Agnes Uniform with pride, almost as proud as my mom is for having graduated in SAA. Cheers to all of you, as mommy calls you "PINANGATUGANGS"

Elisa Muñoz Pardo (Marili) Tamen's daughter

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

Author anonymous

A friend is a person whom you would want to have near you when you are dying,
And whom you like to be with while you are living;
To whom you spontaneously turn for help when you are in trouble,
And who is the first to hear good news when you have good fortune;
Whose counsel you seek when you are perplexed,
And whose congratulations you welcome when the perplexity is solved;
In whom you can confide the secret you want no other living soul to know,
Yet will never pry into your heart to discover whether there are any more secrets to be revealed;
On whom you can lean when your heart aches,
But who will never take advantage of your leaning;
Who will get down on his knees beside you when you are down,
And forget that he did so when you are on your feet again;
Who has pain in his tone when you are in distress,
And melody in his voice when your heart is gay;
On whose shoulder you can weep when you are sad,
And with whom you enjoy laughing when you are glad;
Who has tears on his cheek when you suffer,
And a twinkle in his eye when the sun shines on you again;
Who admires you for your strong points,
But loves you in spite of your weak ones;
Who can laugh at your foibles,
Without despising you for having them;
Who makes allowance for your limitations,
Without allowing them to obscure your talents;
Who is proud of you when fortune favors you,
But not ashamed of you when you fail;
Who contributes to your success,
Without claiming any share in it;
Who can feel and show satisfaction when you please him,
But never resentment when you disappoint him;
Who will tell you the truth even when it hurts,
And to whom you can tell the truth without his taking offense;
Who is not ashamed to ask you a favor,
But will never impose on you for the favor that is done;
Who will not hesitate to do you a favor,
Even at the risk of being imposed upon;
Who can extend a helping hand and lighten your load,
Without expecting any other reward than having had the privilege of so doing;
Who gives all he can whenever he can,
Without ever keeping a record of what he has given;
Who says the best about you,
When everybody else is saying the worst.

Any person needs at least four of such friends,
Every person owes it to himself to be such a friend to at least four fellow humans.

God help me to be such a friend.

Submitted by Gladys Gregorio

GLADY GREGORIO FANTILLO

Most friendships are born out of shared passions - a few out of parallel needs. Over the years, my friendship with Gladys has encompassed the whole spectrum of living. I am not able to picture myself projected into a future without her gentle spirit blending with the most essential elements hanging in a drip.

Gladys had thought our friendship was a product of the natural law of attraction - of opposites, glaringly. She thought I was the sun - intense (I would call that loud), dazzling in gregariousness (that to me is high visibility/over-exposure) to her quiet moon - timid, restrained, passive (the GGF dictionary). Given the differences in personality, our friendship has come through 20 or so years of history. Music is easily the common denominator - it is the sugar to our coffee. We share a frivolous sense of humor, too - we could die guiltlessly laughing with the dolphins! On the serious side, we have driven through the wee hours of the morning wondering if we'll ever find the answers to any of Life's tough questions ... and where does God reside? We are very good at condoning each other's periodic frolic in the ashes of our Youth - the best yet when we fall into them together!

At midlife, my journey has been for the most part a blind, wild, exhilarating, and sometimes dangerous ride with many sharp turns and sudden drops for which none of my education had me prepared. But every time the call comes too close for sanity, there will always be this friend who seems to have made it part of her life mission to race ahead of me - clearing the thorny bushes in the ravine, casting a lifeline out to the sea, holding out a flickering candle in the storm, pulling me forward, coaxing me to move one more step, a few times screaming at me to please let go and take the bloody leap, but also at certain points along the road, flagging me down to halt and make time to catch a breath. She is the one who tells me the story because she sees the picture in widescreen HDTV while I agonize through the lens of a disposable camera. She is the fairy godmother who so gracefully waves her magic wand in my direction and thoughtfully gets me to the ball on brand new tires. We live more than half the whole width of USA across from each other but her intuition can point accurately where I am situated in life at any given time -she even knows when my pantry is running empty. Through many lean years, I have made good acquaintance with material depravity; but by grace the reality does not threaten my sense of integrity because I know of a friend who will not hesitate to split her cheese or cut up the holiday ham to share with me. Living alone, so remotely detached from the warmth of home, that singular thought has carried me through New Year's Eves past. That same thought quiets my anxiety over whatever global feasts are yet to come and fortune still always misses my address.

If by the time I reach the end of the road people see my glass still half empty, I will drink up, turn the music on, kiss the earth and look up to the sky with a grateful heart and a big smile because she who sends me a choice of lemon butter / vanilla/ strawberry/ dark chocolate frosting to doll up my humble puto also remembers to pack the candles, buntines, shimmering confetti and my favorite champagne - just in case the celebration gets real heavy!

Thank you, God - for my friend Gladys

Ma. Perfecta S. Ramos

From: Gladys Fantillo
Sent: February 8, 2005 2:57 AM
To: Alexis Munoz; Mila Magno
Subject: My Daughter Karina's Contribution

Look at what this Friendship Book is creating! I would never have known these thoughts of my own daughter had I not asked her to write a piece to send over!

I can die happy now,

Gladys :-)

Friends for Life

By Karina Fantillo

I am turning 30 this year. I chose the road less traveled and for that, I have a loving family, a warm cozy home and a purposeful life. I am honored to share my thoughts on friendship and my mother, Gladys Gregorio-Fantillo with the graduates of St. Agnes Academy.

For much of my 30 years, I have had this image of my mother as a breadwinner, caregiver, teacher, and supporter. As I have grown older, I have learned she is also a perfectionist, giver, dreamer and a very good friend. I have to admit that I used to resent her for seemingly giving more to her friends than to her own family. Now, with my own daughter, I realize that the sacrifices a parent, particularly a mother makes for her family is never fully recognized and appreciated.

They say, you can't choose your family, but you can choose your friends. I love my family but chances are my daughter may never know my dreams and aspirations in life. Good friends, the ones we keep in touch with even if we become separated by continents and water, are kindred spirits. They know us so well that sometimes we do not even have to say a word and they will understand.

Like most other Americans, my friends and I get caught up in our individual lives and day-to-day schedules. But when it is a child's birthday or even our own birthdays, the calls are made, the cards are sent, hugs are abundant. My friends have been there through marriages, children, changes in careers and changes in life directions.

I have been fortunate in my adulthood to get to know my mom as a friend. I think it is safe to say that her friends from her younger days in the Philippines probably know her better than I do. Through them, I catch a glimpse of who my mother truly is, not the one- or two-dimensional figure I saw growing up. From old photographs and meeting and hearing her talk to her old friends, I have been given the opportunity to imagine what she was like as a child, a teenager, and the difficulties in life she encountered. Still, through it all, her obstacles and disappointments, she found strength and determination, fueled by her desire to find happiness.

As a teenager, I always thought I was so different from my mom. Nowadays, I see the ways in which our lives parallel each other. I am comforted to know that at any age, like her, my dreams still have a chance to be fulfilled and although our appearances may change in time, the most important things are constant, like love. I am reassured by the fact that when I become a "Golden Girl", I too can count on the same support group that has kept my mother sane throughout her life.

Like some marriages, some friendships do last a lifetime. At my best friend's wedding last Thanksgiving, I saw my elementary school friends. It was a happy reunion for all of us. Although more than 10 years have passed since we graduated Epiphany School, we came together like we were 14 years old again. It felt like coming home.

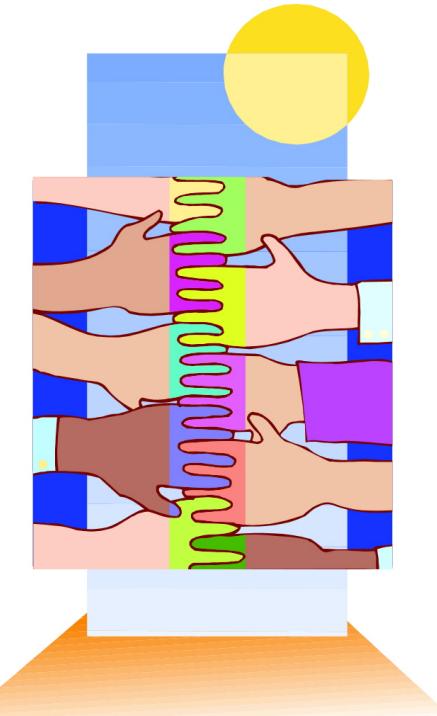
Mediatrix Vallejo Villanueva

REUNION

A MOMENT ...
RICH
WITH OPPORTUNITY
TO REMEMBER

A DAY
TO CLOSE
THE GAP
BETWEEN
YESTERDAY
AND TODAY

A TIME
TO CHECK
THE REALITY
AND GRACE
OF
WHATEVER
IS LEFT
OF OUR
BEING
AND BECOMING



with deepest GRATITUDE..
to the Benedictine Sisters
the Faculty and non teaching staff
of St Agnes Academy

and to HIM
for His love and faithfulness
though the years
of our aloneness
and togetherness

MAY 1, 2005
THE RHYTHM ...

STAYIN ALIVE
SILVER JUBILARIANS CLASS '80

THE TIMES OF OUR LIFE
RUBY JUBILARIANS CLASS '65

MAOGMANG PAGIRIBA
GOLDEN JUBILARIAN CLASS
'55

BALIK OGMA II
WORLDWIDE..AGNESIANS

To my dear classmates, Class '55:

Let me start congratulating each and everyone of you in our Golden Jubilee.

At the time of our graduation, that March of 1955, we were 16 / 17 years old, not a clue of what was in store for each one of us. At present we are scattered all over the globe, some in Australia, others in Europe or the United States the rest in the Philippines yet our strong Agnesian Spirit, our Benedictine upbringing have kept us together like one. Not many can boast of this after 50 years.

Yes 50 years have passed - I still feel chained to all of you dear classmates. Years have gone by, I am a granny now, yet I don't feel old. Do you? No doubt there must have been a lucky star blessing us up above during our school days. Who knows, maybe that is what keeps us linked together like a bunch of bananas, making us feel young, if not in appearance no doubt in spirit, and with pure sentiments of true and sincere love towards each other.

Thank God for our lucky star. Keep on Class'55 that is our spirit, keep the fire glowing.

With love, God bless you all.

Always,
Tamen



From: **tamen**

To: Pinangat@yahoogroups.com, SAA-PI@yahoogroups.com

Date: Mar 3, 2005 5:42 AM

Subject: [Pinangat] DISAPPOINTMENTS

Dearest Pinangatugangs:

I was having a shower and as usual thinking of my trip to the Philippines and all of a sudden something clicked in my mind. We are all very excited to meet each other, we are all looking forward for that big event. Some much younger some much older, like me, and I thought what will my very dear friends see when they put an eye on me, what will their impression be. Lots of you have not seen me for ages some for 50 years some for 5 years and the younger ones don't know me at all. **WHAT WILL THEY SEE ;WHAT IS THE PICTURE THEY HAVE OF ME** now that they don't see me and what will they think when they do?

I am talking about myself but it works for everybody so please don't make room for **DISAPPOINTMENTS** whether we are stout or thin whether we are young or old whether we look older than our age or younger just please pinangatugangs don't make room for **DISAPPOINTMENTS**. We are what we are and we are all AGNESIANS through and through and that is the SPIRIT THAT SHOULD PREVAIL WHEN WE ALL MEET AGAIN.

When I saw Ditz last she was a girl of about 9??? When I saw Totie she was, what 8? Naku and I am 66 years old now taba as always having made about a 101 diets never succeeded to be slim. So please dearies, **DON'T MAKE ROOM FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS** let us all be Merry and enjoy those little days that the Lord will grant us. Not many people can boast of the closeness we all have just for being Agnesians, bako?

Also let us all pray fervently that all goes well that all of us meet with no problems. Specially let us pray for our CyberQueen to be able to make it for this meeting. Mila I hope your mom is well and fit now ; yes I know it will take time until she will be able to move again but **LET US ALL PRAY HARD FOR THAT**.

The Lord must be TIRED of our pleadings but we are just following what HE wants us to do, is it, **ASK AND YOU WILL RECEIVE?**

I am copying Lina in this one cause, don't know whether I told you, she is my "daughter" in the Philippines and I am so excited too to give her a big, big hug. Lina lived with us from 4 to 9 years old when I came to Spain I wanted to bring her along with us but of course her mom did not permit it and I would have done the same. Her mom was my kids'yaya we love her so and she is 92 years old. I have to go and see her in Goa. Her sister was my yaya too so you see our families are very close. They are like family to me.

All for now my dear, loving friends. Hope to hear from you soon. **AND I REPEAT DON'T MAKE ROOM FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS** let us all give us all a big hug when we meet without giving it another thought. It could be some mga bungi, some mga matabaon , some mga maniwangon. Some grew older and are more pangit, some as they grew older nag magayon . Who knows, bodies are unpredictable as time goes by. I think there is music to that last bit. "**AS TIME GOES BY**"

LOVE YOU ALL , TAKE CARE, GOD BLESS write soon.

MANAY TAMEN

Thanks, Tamen, very sweet of you and a great reminder because we all worry about how our friends will take our transformation. My experiences at meeting two former high school gangmates (yup, we were partners in crime) for the first time after four decades were momentarily marked, not by disappointment - but by shock – shock at not how much they had aged (because I did prepare myself for the worse prior to the meeting), but how little they had changed. I reunited with **Trinidad Gonzalez** (and just as in our schooldays, was with younger sis, **PG**) in Wichita, KS, five years ago, and **Zenaida Ravago**, in Las Vegas, at the Pinangat reunion over a year ago. Both girls, friends of mine forever – looked as petite and cute as they were in high school. I swear, I thought they had just stepped out of our senior yearbook!

Ohhh, there was a slight loosening of skin around the chin and neck and perhaps around the nose and eyes - but that was it. Though both of them very nicely teased me about being just a bit "taba" which I accepted graciously knowing that I had gained far more weight than a "bit" since we last met - after 35 years of good eating and clean living in midwest America - what can one expect. But, as I said, this was just a pause - momentary – because looks were quickly forgotten as soon as we all settled down to the best part of the reunion, sharing experiences, remembering, laughing, giggling - shedding years in the process - and at the end of the day promises to stay in touch. I predict that this is what will happen at Balik Ogma - there won't be a disappointed soul there - at least I hope not.

We were all such rosebuds when we left St Agnes at around 15 or 16 years of age (the boys who graduated at 9 or 10 will resent being compared to rosebuds so are excluded from this conversation but can join if they wish). There was a poem by Robert Herrick which we all studied in SAA English Lit dedicated to virgins urging them to marry (I always thought it a very silly poem) – the poem really doesn't apply to most of us at all now but in one small sense does because I feel we've really all turned into rosebuds – young again - don't you all feel suddenly invigorated? - - given all these golden opportunities to "gather ye while ye may" and not allow time to pass us - so am printing the first paragraph as follows:

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.
The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

- **Vicky Arboleda Shroeder (Class 60)** -

From: Mercado, Lolita R
To: Pinangat@yahoogroups.com, SAA-PI@yahoogroups.com
Date: Mar 3, 2005 5:53 AM
Subject: RE: [Pinangat] DISAPPOINTMENTS

Manay naman, although i'm not going to see you as i won't be there at the reunion, always remember Manay the physical side is NOT that important. It is the HEART, the inside of your being, that LOVING, CARING side which plays the greatest role and the bond that binds us Pinangats together that will see us through this reunion. Who cares kung bungi? buta? mataba? payat as butiki? nobody cares about that! We only care that everyone should be there, loving each other and caring for each other as brothers and sisters na pinagburugkos kang Alma Mater ta.

I wouldn't even think of how I look but would be thinking more of how tight will I hug him or her, bako? The Lord never gets tired of listening to us. In fact that's what He wants - for us to be always talking to him. See Matthew 7:7.

Tikker! Lolits

From: Totie Balce
To: agnesians <saa-pi@yahoogroups.com>
Date: Mar 6, 2005 3:25 AM
Subject: [SAA-PI] re: disappointments

manay T, please stop thinking negative. nobody will notice kung tiripo, kiribad, kirilas, etc. ka cuz we are just too excited to see and hug you. i remember when i met my classmates last year (most of them after 40 years), we were oblivious to each other's physical appearance. but i know, you are just like wine.....you get better as you age! till we meet on april 29! nakakaulakit man iyang excitement mo manay.

totie

From: Vicky Schroeder
To: SAA-PI@yahoogroups.com
Date: Mar 6, 2005 8:30 AM
Subject: Re: [SAA-PI] re: disappointments

Speak for yourself, Totie. Kung kirilas si Tamen, I would notice.

-V-

Heh heh heh



What a wretched lot of old shrivelled creatures we shall be by-and-by. Never mind - the uglier we get in the eyes of others, the lovelier we shall be to each other; that has always been my firm faith about friendship.

* George Eliot

Submitted by Mila Alvarez Magno

To me, fair friend, you never can be old
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still.

* William Shakespeare

Submitted by Mila



Friends broaden our horizons. They serve as new models with whom we can identify. They allow us to be ourselves - and accept us that way. They enhance our self-esteem because they think we're okay, because we matter to them. And because they matter to us - for various reasons, at various levels of intensity - they enrich the quality of our emotional life.

* Judith Viorst

Submitted by Mila

Close friends contribute to our personal growth. They also contribute to our personal pleasure, making the music sound sweeter, the wine taste richer, the laughter ring louder because they are there.

* Judith Viorst

Submitted by Mila



I am
up
here!

Where Forth Art Thou My Friend?

Gray concrete walls, white-washed edifice,
grassy playground,
A silent river streaming behind our Lady's
Grotto,
Benedictine nuns, impeccable in black and
white,
Pinkish cheeks, stern looks, cherubic smiles,
Adorable, awesome, divine.

Amidst hues of white and blue
Small faces, curly twirls, chinky eyes say
'Hello',
Fair skin, olive-brown, mestiza, bulao-ikus,
Chubby, giggly, quiet, mischievous,
Skinny legs, dimpled cheeks, super cow-licked
head,
I found a Friend.

Sharing comic books, a Mayo sandwich, White Rabbit,
Sweating, playing, dodging the ball, skipping the rope,
Dropping the hankie, a ring-a-ring of roses,
Ride the swing, see-saw, aragawan bases.
Bell ringing, Angelus, Confession, 1st Holy Communion,
Clap-clap, genuflect, visits to the Blessed Sacrament.
A peek at the Clausura, white, all white, curtains and sheets,
Bad boy, bad boy, quiver at the thought - the Dark Room.
Punishment, punishment, sit with a girl-friend,
Write a thousand times, I will still speak Bicol no end.
Study, study, compete and win, BACS Meet's the game,
Ping-pong and volleyball, rah-rah-rah, zis-boom-bah,
Maglalatik, Malaguena, Declamation and song,
Trophies and medals, ribbons and pennants,
Six, seven years go by, up the stage, take a bow,
Where forth art thou my Friend,
For now I say Goodbye.

An open field, a wooden structure, an army barracks, or Boys Town,
A baton-wielding secular, hiding behind the walls, watching, looking.
Rowdy boys, juvenile delinquents, filthy words, smoking in the john,
Gambling away, Pusoy on the run, daggers and knives,
Noses bleeding, bruised faces, torn shirts, call the police.
Transition, change, a Volkswagen Van drives into town,
Big-nosed religious Yankee, balloons in hand, means business and how,
Corporal punishment, standing under the sun, endless drills,
Purging, detaining, expelling, until was born the Long Gray Line,
I found a Friend.

Fresh stacks of books, Encyclopedia Britannica, National Geographic,
Book reports, science projects, mad scramble for specimens.
Confide, confide, puberty, pubescent curiosity, innocent, naive,
Love letters, puppy loves, crushes, dedications, first dance,
Jam sessions over pitchers of pineapple juice, sticks of barbecue,
Longing for the girls in white Sunday uniforms, corsages on their breasts,
White stockings, silk, flawless, sheer, with Sodality Medals hanging.
As we march in unison, singing our Graduation Song, I turn,
Where forth art thou my Friend,
For now I say Goodbye.

A university, a college, exclusive school, imposing facades,
A babel of tongues, dialects, accents, a Big City, I'm lost.
Courses, majors, units, sessions, scholarship, working student,
Professors, instructors, deans and regents, where, what, how,
Education, Commerce, Medicine, Law, Nutrition,
Engineering, the Priesthood, the Military,
Confused, tossed a dime,
I found a Friend.

Share a home, dormitory, boarding house, a bed, a room,
Ride a jeepney, a bus, a sedan, Espana, Taft, Morayta,
Explore the city, its sights and sounds, bright and dark,
Dewey Boulevard, Mabini, Escolta, a stroll in the park,
Luneta, Intramuros, dine in style, Aristocrat, Brown Derby,
Mamon-Luk, Little Quiapo, Divisoria, China-Town,
Skip a class, truant, truant, movies, Avenida, Azcarraga, Cubao,
Watch the Colegialas go by, Twiggy and Military look,
Hipsters and platform shoes, Psychedelic and Beatles-do,
Swinging to the rhythm of Shing-a-ling and Boogaloo,
Waking to the thrust of theses, reports, orals and finals,
Cramming, cramming, order my cap and gown and class ring, too,
Photo shoot at Bob's, the prom is coming, Hilton or Sulo,
Where forth art thou my Friend,
For now I say Goodbye,

Resumes, bio-data, classified ads, referrals,
Options, choices, commerce, industry, professions, careers,
Banks, hospitals, offices, schools, private, government,
Applications, testings, interviews, waiting, hoping, beginning,
I found a Friend.

A cubicle, a desk, a shift, a division, a project, a mission,
Reports, studies, portfolio and briefs, challenges, sweat,
Meetings, conferences, seminars, projections, budgets,
Evaluations, appraisals, assignments, promotions, bonuses,
Pay raises, terminations, resignations, transfers, moving on.
Nothing seems enough, let's drink to that -at Papillon,
Mandarin, Shakeys, Tia Maria, the Intercon,
Where forth art thou my Friend,
For now I say Goodbye.

The world beckons, the Arabian deserts, Canadian Rockies,
Australian out-backs, Bavarian forests, the Castilian sun,
Culture and tradition, blending in a foreign tongue,
Ministers and Ambassadors, Consuls and Attachés,
Commissioners and Diplomats, across countries and continents,
And to America I went, to seek its fortunes and dreams.

Cosmopolitan New York, romantic San Francisco,
Trendy Los Angeles, cold Chicago,
East Coast, West Coast, the Heartland of America,
I came, I saw, I had nowhere to go,
A suit case in hand, identity anon,
A basement, a studio, cold and damp,
I found a Friend.

Skyscrapers and towers, Wall Street and Exchange Plaza,
Brokerages and insurance, of raging Bulls and Bears,
Yuppies in suspenders and herring-bone suits,
Dapper, dapper, in a world of high-tech and power.
One step at a time, up the ladder of success,
Confronting a world of turmoil and economic mess.
Assets pile up just as liabilities accumulate,
What certainty awaits, after retirement and pensions dissipate.
Life has been good, in this land of milk and honey,
Where forth art thou my Friend,
For now I say Goodbye.

As waters shimmer on the Golden Pond of twilight,
With silver in your hair, gold in your teeth,
Stones in your kidney and gas in your belly,
A wealth of natural resources, I agree.
I long, I yearn, I wonder, for past enduring memories,
Small faces, curly twirls, chinky eyes saying 'Hello',
Gray concrete walls, white-washed edifice, grassy playground,
A silent river streaming behind our Lady's Grotto,
Where forth art thou my Friend,
I'm here, I'm back, I'm home!

Romeo R. Gojo
Class '60 GS
January 16, 2005

Dearest Mary Ann,

**You make everything easy for everyone.
You are a magical person to us. Though
I only lifted my wishes from a greeting
card, still, if I had a magic wand, all
your days will be filled with fun and
laughter and always...**

**"A touch of magic to catch your fancy,
Delightful surprises to make you smile,
A world of sunshine to warm your heart."**

You are exceptional!!

Love,

Alexis Munoz Dasig, HS '63



mary ann pineda reynosa

TO BIYAY (CLASS 63)

I lost a sister in 2001. I gained a sister when you walked back into my life.
You listened, you advised, you scolded, you took charge, you encouraged, you
gave...very selflessly, very willingly.
This is to let you know how much I appreciate everything.

Love,
Nenette

Many people will walk in and out of your life. But only
true friends will leave footprints
in your heart.

Submitted by Jing

The joys of friendship
are true flowers in the
garden of Life.

Submitted by Bong

To Mary Ann,
"How lucky I am to have known someone who
was so hard to say goodbye to." *unknown author*

Love,
Gwen, Nels & Ting

If friends were like flowers,
I'd want a whole bunch just like
you.

Submitted by Bong

A true friend
warms you with her presence;
trusts you with her secrets,
remembers you in her prayers.

Submitted by Bong

If friendship's joys were flowers,
What a wonderful garden we'd be.

Submitted by Bong

Friendship is: MARY ANN PINEDA sleeping on the floor so her classmates MILA ALVAREZ, AMY ACHACON, CECILE MANALAC AND BONITA AREVALO can sleep comfortably in her home during last year's reunion. And if that's not enough, she served them with the most heavenly chocolate with pinipig for breakfast. No greater love a friend has!

Submitted by Bong

FRIENDSHIP BLESSING

There's a blessing in our friendship
It's a bond between us two,
For the Lord brought us together,
And I thank Him now for you.

You've been there when I needed you,
We've shared our dreams and plans,
And when at times I've fallen down,
You've given me a hand.

You are always such a joy,
Each time that we're together,
But more than that you are my friend,
And in my heart forever!

Author Unknown

Submitted by Bong

May your house always be too small to hold all of your
friends.- *Irish Blessing*

Friendship is a gift tied with a ribbon of love

Friends are a little bit of heaven right here on earth

Submitted by Bong

FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS (45TH REUNION)

By Rocio Casimiro Nuyda, Leonor Cabigao Bismonte & Loida Nicolas Lewis

When our St. Agnes' Academy Class of '59 celebrated its Ruby Anniversary in 1999, we had so much fun seeing one another. For many, it was the first time to come back and be reunited with classmates since graduating 40 years back. Being with each other on that occasion made us vow that five years later, for our 45th anniversary, we shall all try to meet in the United States.

Five years flew by and before we knew it, 2004 had arrived!

Our plan was for our classmates in the Philippines to save for the plane trip and for **Loida Nicolas Lewis** to ensure that they get a visa from the American Embassy in Manila. Alas! Only four were granted a tourist visa by Consul No. 6. Consul No. 4 denied everybody else as being "presumed to be an immigrant to the United States". We were all dismayed and despite Loida's impassioned plea, the Consul Officer was unrelenting.

September 4, 2004 was D-Day. Our four classmates who were granted tourist visas were: **Bernarda Lita, Eleanor Babasa Lita, Alicia Fernandez Romero, and Haide Llarena Manatlao**.

Plans were underway as early as seven months prior to their arrival. A detailed itinerary was written, with copies provided to the U.S. hosting classmates, and to the Philippine visiting classmates. The itinerary was planned in order to give our visiting classmates a taste and flavor of California, Arizona, Las Vegas, New York, Washington, D.C. and New Jersey.

On the night prior to their departure for the U.S.A., **Evelyn Estevez Duran** accommodated our four classmates at her home in Green Hills for the final pre-departure tips. Evelyn arranged to take our classmates to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport for their flight to the U.S. on Sept. 4th.

Point of entry was Los Angeles, California. The California, Arizona and Las Vegas itinerary, otherwise known as **Tour 1** was hosted by **Noemi Goyena Navarro, Salvacion "Sonty" Lee, Filipinas "Babie" Lianko Chua, Josefina "Josie" Ruivivar Perez, and Rocio "Chio" Casimiro Nuyda**.

Our visiting classmates arrived at the Los Angeles International Airport with a fanfare that was unparalleled. This was when the fun began! On that day, the airport literally came to a halt. The arriving planes and passengers were parked and were at a standstill on the tarmac for an undetermined length of time, causing several hours of delay.

Noemi and Babie, with their spouses, were the welcoming parties while Rocio was on stand-by at her home's "tower" for the status of the arrival.

On the day and time of arrival, there was a little commotion at the departure area of the Los Angeles International Airport. A battery exploded from a passenger's flashlight, causing a skirmish and a security alert. The arrival area was cordoned off and cars were not allowed to go through. Noemi and Babie could not get to our classmates and they began to worry. Our classmates, on the other hand, finally deplaned at 2:00 p.m. after a six-hour nerve-wracking delay.

It must be mentioned, too, that while waiting for our visiting classmates, the airport situation was covered on television. Out of the hundreds who were at the waiting area, Babie and Noemi's husband, Rod, were singled out and interviewed on Fox News. That night, the interview was aired and it reaffirmed the Agnesians' command of the English language, through Babie's glib responses. It can be said that Class '59 and the arrival of our visiting classmates indeed made history, short of saying that Rod and Babie have become Hollywood celebrities!

While in Los Angeles, our visiting classmates were billeted at the Marriott Hotel. The itinerary for Tour 1 in L.A. (Sept. 4-7) included several fun activities such as: Universal Studios, Disneyland, Hollywood, Rodeo Drive, Kodak Theatre, Historic Farmer's Market, Beverly Hills tour of movie stars' homes, parties hosted by all the hosts

(Agnesians from other class years were invited), shopping at the famous ‘Grove’. On Sept. 8th, the hosts for Tour 1 put our visiting classmates on a group tour bus bound for Arizona to bask in the spectacular panorama of the Grand Canyon. The last part of this tour was Las Vegas where on Friday, Sept 10th, Noemi, Rocio, Filipinas and Sonty met up with them at the Rio Hotel, booked at adjoining rooms. While in Las Vegas, Class ’59 was joined by co-Agnesians and Las Vegas residents like Nina Los Banos, Aida Arciga, Ditas Los Banos, and Gloria Onate. The group watched a show at the Bally Hotel and returned to L.A. with Rocio behind the wheels.

On Sept. 13th, our visiting classmates took the plane en route to New York, where Loida welcomed them at the JFK International Airport on Monday midnight. Our visiting classmates, along with other East Coast, West Coast and ‘Italian’ classmate, **Lina Llaguno Ciani**, who later arrived to join us, were billeted at her Fifth Avenue apartment, fronting Central Park, Loida being the host in New York for **Tour 2** (Sept. 14-19),

For the next two days, escorted by **Jennie Yap Chan** (New Jersey) and **Norma Balana Rubio** (Virginia Beach) on the Hop-on-Hop-off city tour bus, our visiting classmates saw the landmarks of New York City including the UN World Headquarters.

On Wednesday evening, Sept. 15th, on board a mini bus, the group left for Lily Pond Lane, East Hampton where the Lewis’s ‘household crew’ awaited us to a sumptuous dinner. The group was given a tour of the country home by the Atlantic Ocean. On Sept. 16th early morning, our West Coast classmates arrived and the noisy group became even more alive! After breakfast, those who could not resist the warmly-heated pool behind the country home, put on their swimsuits while some just relaxed while watching the ‘bathing beauties’. Every one later got busy clicking their cameras in the various rooms of the country home, recording these special events for posterity.

Most evenings, we sat down to a formal dinner, did dancing to the tutelage of Norma and singing afterwards with **Leonor Cabigao Bismonte** at the piano. For the rest of the night, in our sleepwear, we held a ‘no-holds-barred’ session we called ‘moments of truth’ where each one shared and filled in the gaps between high school graduation and the present.

Loida also took us on a tour of East Hampton where she showed us the ‘hide-outs’ of celebrities like Chevy Chase, Martha Stewart, Claudia Cohen, Steven Spielberg, and others. We did not have the time, though, to see the homes of Billy Joel, Kim Bassinger & Alec Baldwin.

On our return to New York City, **Amelia “Ammie” Serapio Laguilles** (Maryland), **Mary Navarez and Andrea Malejana** (Virginia) and Lina Llaguno Ciani (Rome, Italy), joined us to a Broadway show and Japanese buffet dinner afterwards.

Sunday morning, Sept. 19th, after attending Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, we were back at 5th Avenue where we had brunch and more bonding took place. Thereafter, our visiting classmates were off to Washington, D.C. which was **Tour 3** hosted by the remaining East Coast group: **Ammie, Norma, Jennie, Leonor, Mary, and Andrea** while the West Coast classmates departed for their respective destinations. After two days of sightseeing in the nation’s capital, our visiting classmates along with Norma and Jennie came back and spent some time with Jennie at her home in New Jersey.

Eighteen glorious days and nights spent together have not only renewed our friendship that have spanned over four decades but have strengthened our ties more than ever. Those moments of bonding clearly showed that notwithstanding the miles that separate us, the tide of time and experience that each one had gone through, we still felt as we were 45 years back. We rediscovered each other again and it did not matter where we were, what we did and who we became during the intervening years. We were Agnesians once again – we giggled and laughed really hard at those after-dinner jokes, embraced, kicked off our shoes, and boy, it felt good!

Parting time was difficult and it was not without tears for some. As we look forward to another milestone - our Golden Jubilee five years from now - the 45th Grand Reunion of Class ’59 in the USA is one to be cherished always. #





The call came for a volleyball team to be sent to the 1ST BACS meet. Volunteers were needed. My gang, "the Marx Brothers": **Victoria Ormaechea, Begoña Barrennechea, Carmiña Carceller**, and myself, **Montserrat Celis**, decided to answer the call, thinking it would be exciting, to be sent to the 1st Bacs meet and get to travel to Naga. What fun!!!. Other friends and classmates also joined, among them **Rosie Omaga, Begoña Ormaechea, Cecilia Yanson, Gloria Fernan, Edith Harrow, Glenda Samson** (our killer) and **Placer Jalmasco**. Most of us had never played volleyball before, nor did we know the rules of the game. The BACS meet was 2 months away and we had to cram and learn to play the game in that short period of time. We were haphazardly trained and nothing much was expected from us. We were a token team, just so SAA was represented in that category. Comes that faithful morning of the tournament. For our 1st game we were pitted against the Isabellinas !!! Oh No! This was a team that was known far and wide for their volleyball prowess, the strongest team ever!!! Other teams quaked when advised they would be playing against them! So what to expect? The result was of course, that we were severely beaten(sao-sao). We hardly made any points against these amazons of skill! It was a totally humiliating and excruciating experience. We did not want to show our faces anywhere. We vowed there and then we would try to do better next year.

On coming back from the meet with our heads and self-esteem running at its lowest ebb, **Mother Godfrieda**, who was then the Mother Superior, decided to hire a coach (I am sorry, I forgot his name) who coached us as if we were of the male gender. He was merciless and strict and expected results. He was relentless in his coaching. Mother Godfrieda even gave permission to have us play with other teams around the area even to the extent of playing against the Liceo boys!!!! Unbelievable! We then grew more confident and gained strength in our game. Finally when the 2nd BACS meet arrived, the BACS organizers, knowing how weak our team was from last meet, pitted us against the weakest teams. We then kept defeating every team we played, slowly inching our way to the last game against the strongest team... the Isabellinas!!!! We were so psyched and ready to change our past reputation as losers!!! The game was neck to neck, the crowd was rabid in its cheering their teams. The Balaos(as the Isabellinas were called) won the first game, we won the second , and on the tie- breaker game, with our knees shaking and hearts beating hard, we played as if our lives depended on it, and God be praised!! SAA WINS!!!, Our Team won!! And that, dear pinangatugangs was the start of the long-line of SAA volleyball Championships that SAA garnered after that fateful heart-wrenching game. "The balao is used as bangot to make pinangat"!!!

Montserrat Semenchuk

do you
remember -
when

NOSTALGIA

OLD ANGEL MIDNIGHT





BACS MEET MEMORIES

Arriving at our destination and running with our banigs (no sleeping bags yet!), blankets and pillows so we can get the best spot in the room and shouting tubay kita or tubay kami ni Alexis and Mary Ann, Nita Roces, Inday Bailon, Vicky Benito, Coca Gutierrez, Esther Pinon, Judith Dy, Nelia Munoz!

Do you remember our game against CSI when a large group of Ateneans (they seemed to have occupied one section of the gym!) was cheering for us, led by their cheerleader? We lost but you would have thought that we won the game, with so many people wanting to congratulate us and asking for our addresses or was it autograph :-)

I also remember Sr. Godeharda praying with us before the game and rubbing holy water on our palms!

BACS MEET '64 We beat CSI, the perennial champion, in a very close exciting game! We celebrated as though we already have the championship in the bag and then losing to Colegio de la Milagrosa in a heartbreaking game during the final!

Do you remember going to Guinobatan to play volleyball with St. Benedict's team and we would have a contest on who could hold her breath the longest while passing by the "longest bridge"? I've passed that bridge again and was disappointed to discover that it is not long at all (in fact, haliputon man sana palan!). I still hold my breath every time I cross it and smile and remember the fun we used to have!

Can you still smell our locker room located in that tiny space adjacent to the stage?

Do you think that we would have been allowed to wear the volleyball outfits you see now on TV? Do you think that we would have worn it? How about the bikini thongs worn by beach volleyball players? We used to laugh at the long bloomers worn by the players before our time and now my kids laugh when I showed them our picture playing volleyball!

So many happy memories and most of them playing volleyball!

By Jing Lomeda Valenciano

Dearest Jing,

Glad you decided to be a volleyball player instead of a dancer. Our team was not the best....no championship trophy, not even second. Who knows, you might have won the BACS meet dance competition, but I would have lost a friend.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

IN THE SANDS OF TIME.... BACS MEET

By Med Vallejo Villanueva

Our lives are in His hands ..not Ours..
Our times are His .. not Ours

and yet
we cheered...
for every BACS Meet event...

as if only our preparations mattered
as if only our prayers will be heard

as the "PINANGATS" AND "BALAWS"
sang
danced

hit the ball
killed the ball

spelled
computed

wrote essays
waxed poetry
created short stories

Think about it..
Relish the memory
Again and again.
AND AGAIN...

NEVER IRRETRIEVABLY LOST
EVER IRREVOCABLY STORED
Naga Parochial School?
Ateneo de Naga?
Liceo de Albay?

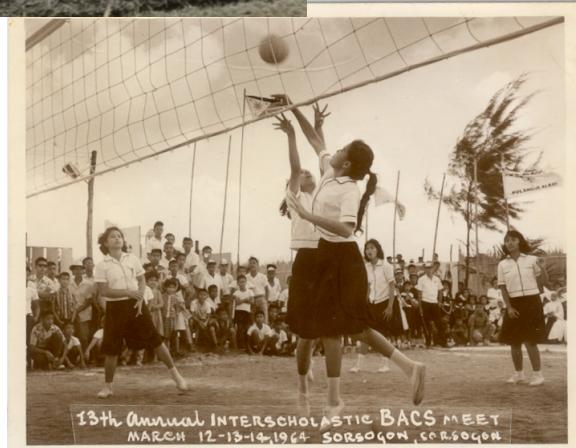
Who do we remember?
What do we recall?

Medals
Gold Silver and Bronze
Trophies
Banners

Honors
Tributes

The monuments of our youth
The wilderness of our existence ...

Together, dear friend, let us find
Immortal footprints in the sands of time..



FROM THE PORTALS OF ST AGNES
 MARCH THE GIRLS OF SAA
 CARRYING BANNERS OF THE BLUE AND WHITE'BRINGING FORTH THEIR VICTORY
 WE AGNESIANS FIGHT FOR OUR NAME AND FOR EVERLASTING FAME
 WE ARE HERE TO WIN THIS GAME TODAY FOR BELOVED SAA..

GO ALEXIS..KILL THE BALL!!!!

OVER HILLS OVER DALE
 ALL AGNESIANS ON THE TRAIL
 WILL GO FIGHTING WHILE SINGIN A SONG
 COUNTERMARCH RIGHT ABOUT
 WE WILL FIGHT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT
 WE WILL CARRY THE BANNER ALONG
 WITH A SIZ BOOM BAH..
 HIT AND SMASH THE BALL
 FELLOW AGNESIANS HERE'S A RAH RAH RAH
 LET THE ECHOES RING
 ALL FOR VICTORY
 FOR THE BLUE AND THE WHITE
 WE WILL FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT



From the last issue of THE AGNESIANS during our senior year:

The BACS Meet is over and done with but many "pine" or "sigh" for it.
 Here's why –

"The Isabilinas and the Ateneans were very friendly with us. They made our stay memorable"
Ellen Estevez, III-A

"We were sports, hurrah, hurrah!"
Delia Benitez, II-A

"The calesas were shaky, the horses were smelly but they were a novelty; I could not help but ride and smile at the horses."

Glady Gregorio, II-A

"Seven to one! Still we lost. How bitter can things get."
Nelia Munoz, II-B

"I almost stop breathing as I watched the volleyball games. It was the most exciting game i had ever seen."
Ma. Teresa Prieto, II-B

"Our stay in Naga was impressive. The Naga Parochial boys treated us cordially. I found the La Milagrosa team our strongest opponent in the volleyball games. We were first in the volleyball, though. Yeba!
Cristobal Yap, Gr. 6-A

"Taking the test was an experience i cannot easily forget. I was very happy when I got second place."
Earl Calleja, Gr. 6-A

"Our teachers and the sisters provided well for us. I had the chance to continue my interesting chats with my friends every morning."
Robert Salazar. Gr. 6-A

"As the captain of the team, I felt i had the biggest responsibility. I prayed very hard that we would win and we did!"
Francisco Cevallos, Gr. 6-A

Theresa Arjona (Class ‘67)

As dedicated officers of the Dramatic Guild running against time for a scheduled presentation, but without a ready comedy script, we utilized the experiment portion of our Physics class in exchanging ideas for the plot and dialogue, until the last group was through with the experiment. But just when we thought that “nakalusot kami”, we heard our teacher Miss Rodriguez say: “Lourdes, Marylou, Ernestita, Theresa and Muriel, perform the experiment!” Not knowing the procedure, the three of us who were taller than Madam immediately surrounded the petite Physics wizard, Tessie Ludovice (who had been helping the other groups) and asked her to do the same for us. Call that quick thinking. This time, nakalusot talaga kami.

In another instance, while rehearsing in the Biology room (which is very near the chapel) for a quite emotional scene of a play we’ll be presenting very soon, Sr. Superior scolded us for being still in school at past 6:00 P.M. and disturbing their vespers. The exercise of her administrative duties was no match to the importance of our practice, but we relented after promising that she’ll excuse us from classes the following day so we could practice.

How can we forget the “watusis” placed in the lobby which is off-limits to students before the afternoon classes. Imagine the reaction of Sr. Carmen who lost her sisterly composure by hopping and running when she stepped on the “watusis” on the way to her violin lessons. Very soft spoken that she was, she could not vent her ire on anybody, the place being deserted, but the students at the adjacent canteen cum social hall had a grand time laughing. But not Sr. Anunciata who started her litany of “you bad girls . . . etc.” scolding even the innocent students passing by upon hearing the mild explosion of “watusis” placed just outside her piano room.

How can we forget the curiosity aroused in us by the oh so secret Clausura –

- throwing stones at the dining area, hoping to see an enraged nun in her unguarded moment to reveal even a bit of her arm;
- being very helpful to the sisters entering the Clausura by carrying boxes/bags hoping to get a glimpse of what’s inside, just to be disappointed in facing a blank wall at the entrance;
- surprising any of the sisters hoping that her veil would automatically slip so we would find out whether their heads are shaven or not.

Making fun of the way the German sisters pronounce the v’s, g’s and d’s of the English alphabet, such that veils and God become “whales and cat”.



Not content by the fun we had during the JS Prom due to the very early curfew the sisters imposed, we proceeded to the house of Judith Dy at Quimanton which was still under construction. In the midst of our merry making, Melba Mirabueno suddenly fell into the deep pit where one of the posts was supposed to be placed. Imagine our mixed expressions of fear of helplessness in trying to help her out, and laughter because she really was so funny down there!

Anecdotes that I remember from my SAA life:

By: Pilar Jordana Larrauri Class' 53

I remember we were very, but very "pilla", naughty as can be. One day during physical education class we were caught hanging on branches and singing to our hearts desire: "A you're Adorable, B, you're so Beautiful, C, you're.... , etc." And guess what, who do you think caught us? No other than Sister Hermine. She brought us to the Principal office and since I was an intern, they summoned my father - they wanted to expel me from my dear SAA, can you imagine. But no, they granted me a First Warning. Therefore I stayed on.

Another short one is about my piano teacher, Ms. Nenita Villalon. She was ever so strict and used to lock us in the piano room for hours so we would practice the piano - I usually escaped by the window.

Them were the days, beautiful days which I look back to and feel nostalgic and I don't regret a minute of my "naughtiness". I think it was fun while it lasted and still am looking backwards and reminiscing.

Wish you all the best dear classmates and fellow Agnesians all over the globe.



Hi! While I am not officially a member of SAA's class of '65 I did graduate with most of the group in 1960. In this spirit I would like to contribute the following:

Strangely enough the first time I lived in Legazpi was in 1956 during that decade's Middle East Crisis when Britain, France and Israel had invaded Egypt in an attempt to seize the Suez Canal. All the families of the U.S. civilian employees at Subic Bay were evacuated. My parents opted to send our family to Albay to reside with my maternal grandfather. However at the time there was only room for my mother and three brothers so my older sister and I were sent to St. Agnes' Academy as boarders. This is how I met **Mediatrix Vallejo** aka Med. I remember being fascinated with her name, even more so, after I found out that it meant intercessor.

The one memory that stands out in that year's stay at the dormitory was the manner in which head lice was exterminated. A report of head lice in two day students prompted fast action to prevent infestation among the boarders. Forming two straight lines (a la Madeline de Paris) in the dorm's common bathroom all the girls stripped to their undies and were given neatly folded white towels. Eight nuns supervised the procedure: two nuns doused the heads with kerosene, another two nuns made sure the white towels remained wrapped around the girls' heads for 5 minutes, two others shampooed and washed the girls' hair while the last two supervised the girls' drying of their hair. What I recall most was the stench of the kerosene which reeked for about a week not only in our hair but also in our sleeping quarters.

When the Middle East crisis had died down later that year our family returned to Olongapo. The second time we were relocated back to the Acuña hillside compound in Albay was in 1960 when Dad was assigned to Bukidnon, Mindanao. By this time we had our own home and my sister and I went to St. Agnes' as day students. What I remember of sixth grade was: the comraderie between the cousins **Inday Bailon** and **Ines Roces**, **Emy Armeña**'s sweet smile, **Amy Manila**'s lovely singing voice, **Jing Lomeda**'s graceful dancing and BACS honors for **Myrna Munoz** in Math, **Med Vallejo** in Oration and **Rose Salazar** in Religion. I also remember the pairing offs of certain names and teasing re: songs dedicated over the radio.

Two years ago I visited my mother who had gone back to live in Albay after residing in the US. It had been decades since I had gone back to Legazpi City. I was curious to see if any of my former classmates still resided in the area so I visited St. Agnes'. The Manang was very accommodating and to facilitate my quest gave me the 1960 record book. Sure enough there we were all listed in alphabetical order and recorded neatly were the number of absences, tardies and test scores. Foresight was never my forte or I would've taken a picture of that page. It would at least have been fodder for conversation at the upcoming Grand Homecoming 2005.

Daisy Ann Acuña Begg
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

REMEMBER WHEN?

.....We used to call **Sr. Pudentiana, OSB**, Sr. Jukebox after learning that she was indeed the daughter of a Duke!

.....**Sr. Irmburg** drove Mary Ann, Alexis and moi out of the H.E. class, as according to her we were disturbing the class with our chatter and not showing any interest at all? She was so furious because Mary Ann or Alexis were answering her back in a playful manner and she called all three of us spoiled brats, trying to ruin her class with no consideration to her and her students, just because we were among the privileged few who were excused from this class being music students and volleyball players. I could never forget that day. That day is so impregnated in my mind and especially Sr. Irmburg's red face and red index finger!!!

Lolita Ramos

.....We used to cram ourselves (10-12 of the Russian group we called ourselves) like a can of sardines in that small jeep that my grandmother owned and driven by my cousin Gerry Buenaventura? He would drive us around places that took our fancy, be it official or private and we would go home late at night with me & Gerry driving everyone home? My grandma would be furious when I got home and Gerry was also driven nuts by this driving us around but he was oh so patient, waiting, waiting and still waiting and then bringing everyone home. He is now in Boac, Marinduque, one leg amputated because of diabetes but still fit and healthy.

.....We as the **Russian group** swore right after the HS Graduation, that we would all meet again 50 years from our graduation and it looks like that would materialize. So HS Class '63, I'll see you all in year 2013!!!!

.....We used to mimic **Miss Soledad Madara** who gave us Literature lessons everytime she said aloud, "DONKEY-HOTE"!!! She meant to say Don Quijote but she had her accent on the wrong syllables, or should I say SILA-BELS????@@@!!!! (Don't know if you would like to publish this. If you don't I would perfectly understand)

Lolita Ramos Mercado

WANTED!!

Immediate information leading to the whereabouts of the following individuals:

**Agnes Orense
Sylvia Munoz
Chita De Los Reyes
Lilia Chua
Elvira Miraflor**

Listed subjects are retired SAA volleyball team members, vintage 1966-67. **Exercise**

Caution! These persons are extremely friendly and may be charmingly infectious.

Under the Tambis Tree My Pinangat Years (a very brief history)

By Vicky Arboleda Schroeder

(I've enclosed a picture of practically the entire class of 1960 taken under the tambis tree at our home in Daraga, Albay on my 10th birthday – there are, of course, some “scragglers/foreigners” from other classes - but not too many)

I've been asked, as a member of the Class of 60, to make a contribution to the Friendship Book. I never was class valedictorian, salutatorian, or even made “honorable mention” distinction at any time during my years at St. Agnes – but, I can see why it is perhaps fitting that I was asked to write on behalf of our class. I am one of two (the other being Hedwig Calleja – or perhaps there are more that I've forgotten – if so, I apologize for the memory lapse – please oh please don't hit me!) that have received recognition for “loyalty” at our high school graduation, in March 1960, eons ago. For those who don't know – that means that I've been a faithful student – attending only St. Agnes from Kinder through 4th Year high school

I've sat down for a while now to try to write this piece but I've drawn a blank every time. I moved away from the Philippines, early on, and settled with husband and family right smack in the middle of the wilds and “desolation” of Indiana, USA, (I exaggerate a bit – it is neither wild nor desolate - but it is a landlocked state with no oceans anywhere close and, in the early 1970's, – oh so far from home). I've only reunited with three high school classmates since 1960. So much time has elapsed and bits of memories that have stayed with me are not much more done impressions now (please bear with me if I mention something or an incident that never was). These impressions have simmered together for years (I love cooking references, as my friend, Jing Lomeda, likes to tell me), have melded and been absorbed into my being through a process much similar to osmosis. It is in me and will be with me, I guess, forever.

I must have been an impressionable, just practically out of toddler stage, at 4 years old because I do remember my very first day as a Kindergartener in St Agnes. I remember stepping out of my parent's spiffy convertible Ford, wearing jumper blue and white, black shoes and white socks for the first time - one beautiful day in June, 1949. I remember the car going round that turnaround, past the white façade of St Agnes, which looked formidable to a little girl - stark white and beautiful - the weather was clear, the skies were blue and Mt. Mayon seemed to be smiling. It was a day that started with big tears - mine - as my parents dropped me off and left me in the good and tender hands of Mrs. Bosch and Sr. Avia. The day would end happily, as I remember, with the promise of more fun to come.

I found it curious and disconcerting even then that the Kindergarten classroom was off to the side, a shedlike structure, a bit away from the main building. Once inside, the classroom was warm and homey made so, no doubt, by the motherly, and cheerful dispositions of Mrs. Bosch and Sr. Avia.

There were letters of the alphabet on the wall - I could already identify each letter having gone through everyday drilling of “Caton” with a tutor, six months prior to my first day of formal school. There also was a boxful of toys, off to one corner, from which Sr. Avia retrieved colorful pictures and things – toys - I had never seen before. Wooden puppets, clowns, a juggler pull toy, etc., that I recognize now as probably something the good sisters brought back from their home country, Germany – Bavaria, possibly. My tears dried up at the sight of two familiar faces - that of my cousins, Wina Velasco and

Toy Jaucian (who was a year younger and was there just to tag along). I remember Hedwig Calleja sitting so quietly and primly – a cute little cherub with fat cheeks.

The beautiful façade of St Agnes Academy is in my memory bank front and center. I see it in my mind's eye all the time - flashes of it coming and going like lightning when I think of home. The building is unique, in my opinion. It sits there, this white structure with the distinctive arched windows, it might not be but I definitely feel it is situated at the heart of Albay province, with sentinels - looming majestic, Mayon Volcano and its much smaller, baby brother, Linyon Hill. It is as if the building has always been there –on that spot from the beginning of time - for all I know, it might have grown out of that spot and took root, like a tree.

The lovely turnaround that fronts St. Agnes was bordered with bush roses, rimmed with rocks painted white, on my first day of kindergarten. It did change from year to year depending on who the groundskeeper was. I was always curious as to what flowers they planted – I remembered jasmine bushes one year. I longed to be able to run around its perimeter from that very first day of school. I had to wait a year to realize this dream. In Grade 1, we were allowed to run loose, at the end of the day as we waited for our rides home – I remembered the day and the thrill of running around that circle.

In 1949 and the first few years of the fifties, the flag ceremony was conducted in that turnaround, at 7:40 AM every morning. The bell rang (I've always wanted to be a bell ringer – a dream I never realized) and the entire student body assembled around it and sang the national anthem and recited the pledge right there, after which we marched to our respective classrooms. I wish that that practice had never ended because it was always so impressive – we stood proud and straight, in our blue and white jumpers with our right hand over our hearts - it was always a moment of pride for me.

I spent the entire decade of the fifties at St Agnes (end of 1949 to 1960). It was a beautiful time – a world war had just ended and everyone must have been looking forward to better things because no one ever talked about the horrible era that had just elapsed. Our country was granted its Independence in 1947 and many of us born just before or after this eventful year were named, as I was, "Victoria," in celebration. It was a terrifically happy and carefree time – and such was the atmosphere in the St Agnes I attended.

The class of 1960 was very unique, I thought. We were a quiet bunch – introverted. The class was full of bright girls – Leticia, Josefina, Thiele, Paz, Trinidad, Emma, Aurora, and the list goes on. However, looking back – I can't remember anyone standing out as the class clown, or the social butterfly involved with extra-curricular matters, or even one full of opinions, etc. We all seemed very serious and quite formal.

While we loved to play just before our 2 PM class everyday, 5 days a week (particularly recalling that Aida Altarejos could run like the wind), we addressed each other by our full names – no nicknames were ever used that I can remember - to this day. I still call Trinidad Gonzalez, by her full name, Trinidad and she calls me Victoria. Even my cousin Wina (she's the only nicknamed one in our class – I guess having a German name like Lidwina is too much of a mouthful) calls me Victoria. Agueda was never Didi – it was always Agueda. Zenaida (who's now nicknamed Zendi) was never Ned but Zenaida. Heloise was Heloise; Angela, Adelina, Paz, Josefina, Leticia, Ester, Thiele, Beatriz, Aida, Emma, etc., etc., etc.

Yes, we loved to play our games along that river – between those trees – we played aragawan ki base and dodge ball. We entered our classrooms, sweaty, stinky, those with kutus furiously scratching their heads – hair disheveled - we were rambunctious – having just expended energy - bright-eyed and

happy at 2:00 PM. At least, until the afternoon breezes, wafting through those open windows right to our classroom while we listened to the drone of our teacher's voices, relaxed, and put most of us to sleep.

We must have had wonderful teachers. I know because I benefited from everything they taught us long after I left school. There was the aforementioned Mrs. Bosch and Sr Avia teaching us our letters and starting with our writing excercises. Miss Reambillo was strict and demanded our attention during Grades 1 and 2. At Grade 3, Mrs. Belleza took over and I credit her with the arithmetical skills - oral exercises in computation - I acquired this in her class and I use it to this day. There was Miss Pacis in Grade 4 – she demanded perfection in theme writing.

In Grade 5, I think we had Sr Nicoleta and Mr. Abalon. While Sister drilled us in Cathecism, Mr. Abalon taught us Social Studies and I seem to remember we learned elementary debating in his class. There was Sr. Lucila in Grade 6. Trinidad was my seatmate and she was Sister's favorite. She (Sr. Lucila) was a particularly good Arithmetic and Science teacher.

In high school, we were so lucky to get Sr. Kuniberta two years in a row. Miss Ravago taught us English Literature and Composition. Both teachers were wonderfully inspirational and progressive. I enjoyed their classes immensely. I think Sr. Kuniberta became a Mother Prioress – she was born to be one because of her inner dignity. In 3rd year, we had Sr Pudentiana, a duchess before her monastic life, we've been told – she was the formidable Geometry teacher – that was her forte – Angle 1 equals Angle 2, she spoke geometric phrases through the side of her mouth – her lips hardly moved – who could ever forget.

During our last year of high school, our class teacher was the inspirational Sr. Godeharda. How lucky could we ever get. She was a born teacher. It was the first year of national government testing in the core subjects which included Physics. Our class was struggling to understand Boyle's law and the Archimides principle of flotation. Sister conducted Saturday classes and attempted to break into that impenetrable wall that stood between ignorance and understanding. She drilled and drummed and at the end of all of it I felt a crack forming on that wall and something trickled in. She never gave up. Our class got the highest score for Physics that year!

My years in St Agnes were packed full of activities and memorable occasions. There were piano recitals headed by my beloved teacher, Sr. Xaveria. Dignified little girls in their Sunday uniform who learned to curtsey and bow properly – a lesson in poise – performing in front of an audience. And, there was the unforgettable experience of playing two pianos with Aurora Olaguer. We were Grade 5 and the title of the piece was "The Tortoise and the Hare."

There were class excursions to resorts – the Mayon Rest House, Tiwi Hot Springs, etc. - via that very dignified mode of transportation – the Alatco.

Sisters Day (September 12) and St Agnes Day (January 21) were celebrated like town fiestas. We got to perform field exercises and the balance beam was introduced one year - there were plenty of games after and food everywhere.

The BACS meet. Who could ever forget the many prizes won by talented pinangats – the graceful and sinewy Balinese dancers – dancing with candles and lights on head, hands and I think even feet (can't remember – surely this is not possible – but I seem to remember upturned toes), excellence in academics and sports, etc. The July 4th parade participations – the long blue line. School plays, which I recalled included Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, King Grisleybeard, Jane Eyre, etc. And, of course – there were some exciting interaction with the boys from neighboring Liceo de Albay.

The years in St Agnes prepared me well for the long circuitous route I took in life's journey. A brick was laid that first day of Kindergarten and the makings of a solid bridge started when I graduated from high school. I have crossed that bridge and many more and made it to the other side each time – now I wish to cross over back and return – to revisit and remember what it was that made me what I am today.

I look forward with great enthusiasm to this year's homecoming. I'm eager to meet old classmates – to reminisce, compare notes, and just have a whale of a time. I feel like having gone on a long journey and ending up to the place where it all begun – a bit like the story of the return of the prodigal daughter.



REMEMBERING ... SAA “Gangs”and the Mambog Tree

By Nellie D. Armeña, HS Class ‘53

During our HS days at St. Agnes Academy (1950-1953), peer groups were called “gangs”. Not notorious, of course, but mere clusters of giggly, naughty teenage girls who found fun and pleasure in each other’s company at recess time, after classes in the afternoons, on weekends, or in school excursions and outings. There were many such groupings, such as the **Merry Goldies** of Mely Crisol, Arlene Gojo, Nims Renovilla, Puring Umali, Pacit Ermitaño, Caring Diaz and Alice Sajul (deceased). I won’t mention the rest as it would fill this page. Each group had its own share of naughtiness and stories to tell. Some were very prim and proper.

Our gang was called **The Agnesian Quintuplets**, composed of Emy Diaz, Tita Belen, Baby Vibal (may she rest in peace!), Neling Thomas and yours truly. For the five of us, High School was the best and most memorable part of our growing-up years – carefree, sweet, innocent and full of laughter. We ate our snacks together at recess time while chatting endlessly and enjoying jokes. After classes in the afternoons, we would flock together under this very big shady tree in front of the Ocampo residence, exclusively ours, and no other group dared grab it from us. One would think we held the **Torrens Title** to that tree. We discussed the school day’s events under that tree, the assignments for tomorrow and poked fun at each other. From that point, we took our ride home. All of us took only one jeep because our houses were in the same direction. Tita would shout PARA TABI! near the Capitol, me in Sagpon, Albay, then Baby a few yards up, Emy further on, and finally Neling in the center of Daraga town. Passing jeepney drivers would shout DARAGA! DARAGA! Not yet, mga Manoy, not yet. Our afternoon is not yet over, so much to talk, laugh and giggle about *pa*. There seemed to be no parting of ways. Sometimes, some Liceo boys would be at the opposite side of the street, making *pa-cute* to us. Harmless guys, though, and would not even have the guts to cross the street. MGA COBARDE! There were the Salazar, Blanco and Ocampo brothers, and occasionally joined in by others. Uuyyy, Emy, nagbu-beautiful eyes saimo si Al Blanco!

After letting countless jeeps pass us by, *Sakaaaaaaay na!* Otherwise, our parents would rant no end if we were still out in the streets before **ANGELUS**. Goodbye, Tree, see you tomorrow.

Our friendship, which is still very strong to this day, in our golden and soon-to-be emerald years, was cemented under that TREE. Minus Baby Vibal, who passed away suddenly in 2002 before we turned Golden Girls in 2003 in the SAA May Reunion, the remaining four of us are still hale and hearty, thanks God! We miss you, dear Baby, yes, we do. Neling is in the USA but we occasionally exchange e-mails. I act as her courier and pass on her messages to Emy and Tita. We hope to see Neling in 2008 for our Emerald Year celebration, together with our ‘53 buddies/classmates from thereMonse, Vi, Rosie, Chony, Nims, Cely, Vicky, Teresa, Olga, Cora, Rose, Estrel.

This won’t be complete without mentioning what transpired after our Golden Jubilee in 2003. Friendships were rekindled and reinvigorated, we rediscovered ourselves. WE meet on birthdays or on other occasions here in Manila as well as in Legazpi ... Mely, Arlene, Puring, Pacit, Norma, Begsy, Carmina, Auring, Tita, Emy, the two Dollys, Maritere, Edith, Flora, the two Chits, the two Carings, Vilma, Velma and the rest of the pack. Each meeting is filled with much laughter and fond memories. Our cyber girls in the USA - Monse, Vi and Neling, keep us posted also on their own happenings and mini-reunions over there.

HALA, MGA PINANGAT-TUGANGS, brace yourselves up for 2008, stay pretty and strong because Arlene will make us CONGA AND MAMBO again or do some other fast number. We will be in our 70’s by then. Let’s show our younger counterparts that WE CAN STILL DO IT!

HAPPY AND HEALTHY DAYS AHEAD, mga dears. Love you!

**To Manay Nellie and her friends under the Mambog Tree,
and to Vicky, under the Tambis tree**

TREES

by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

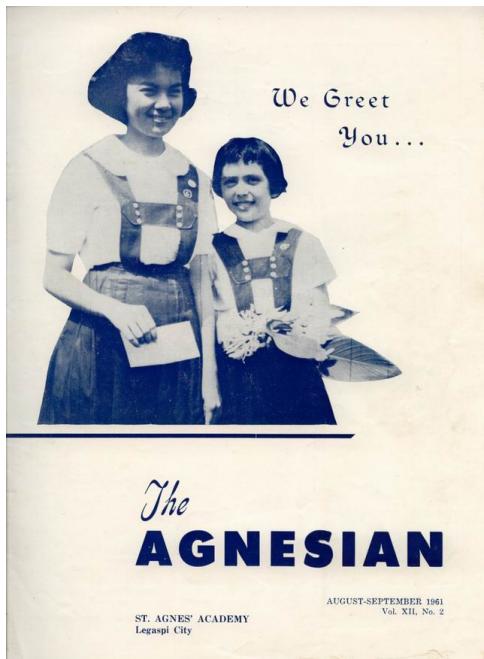
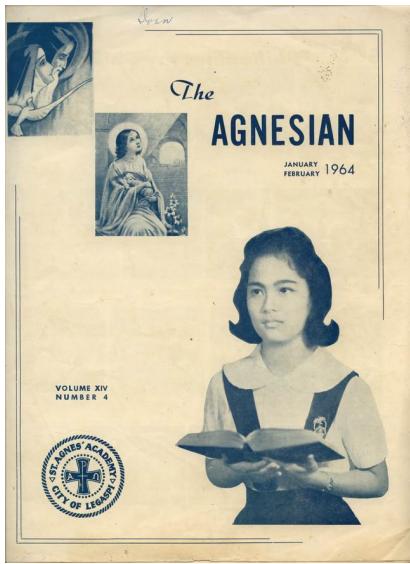
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

*Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig*



St. Agnes' Academy
Legaspi City G - 103
Philippines

Dear Bongs!

I know

b. cabredo
Agnes' Academy
Legaspi City G - 103
Philippines



miss bong arevalo
c/o Mrs. Monina Zenarosa
86-3 Kamuning Road
Quezon City

almost
the same thing had you
the situation---

Ner is getting married this april and i told
neni that it might coincide with your vacation
here with me this summer. let's all presume that
we are all invited.... which ism sure is never remote
if i know her. her friend is a doctor....

And when are you coming again? you were
pala a VIP here to the communication people! And
what did i hear about an Imperial being attracted
to you? Bongs! you were terribly eye-catching!
when will you come again?

love,
agnes

memories are made of these
thanks for the memories
the way we were
those were the days my friend
one sighs at what once was
one smiles at the beauty of love and life and friendship

Fr. Roderick Salazar

CADENA de AMOR the BONDING of a LIFETIME
by Neria Nidea-Soliman

How do I love thee?let me count the ways.....

Once upon a time during our youth I lived in a COCOON of esoterica! I was shy, unfriendly not talking very much.I found solace in writing, things that I could have saidSome details I still remember funny queries like ... what the mothers of Concepcion and Roderick were feeding them because they were very bright; why Oscar Reyes had such big ears...maybe he could hear the teachers more than we do? Why was Maryann such a tall, big girlwas she eating too much? I was amused with Dandy's pigtails ... were they heavy and who was braiding them? I wondered why Roberto Castillo was different from the other boys. Does he know he is good looking; why was Romelino darker than the rest of us? Little would I know that the latter would become the tall, dark and handsome that he is today. My diary was full of small details too about wild fruits like kurombot and datilis or aratilis, wild flowers like camia and the CADENA DE AMOR which I would make into a wreath when playing 'balay-balay' with my sisters and neighbors. I marvelled how beautiful these tiny pink flowers were! And today it is going to symbolize the profound bonding that we had... I too wrote about insects that I encounter during the day like the ants and the kulibangbangs and today the BUTTERFLY has brought meaning back to me with those souvenirs, Chita presented to us balikbayans-Alexis, Lolita, Margie, Mila and myself.

I was rescued from this cocoon of esoterica one day during my first year in college when I received this letter from a boy 2 years younger than me... fresh from the seminary! This was his second letter, after reading it, I slowly went to view myself in the mirror and was pleased with what I saw! I said to myself... he must be right! I kept his well written, poetic letters for a long time but never answered them though. That time I thought that it was not normal for younger boys to like older girls....

A new creature out from the cocoon... I found friends among the Agnesian Scholastics, Mila, Marsa, Chita, Med, Agnes, Evelyn Locsin and her sister Josephine, Amy Manila and Rosemarie Salazarthis time no more diary writing...I felt like a bird out from the cage....I was free! My dear classmates, this explains why you don't have much recollection of me during our elementary and high school days. Perhaps it was also because I did not excel in the academicsif I got honors it was from music and conduct ...not even Religion! In high school I was living in a comfort zone inside my cocoon too frightened to peep outside more so to get out from it! Today I am the Neria that is real....alive and kicking!

It was middle of November 2002 when I told myself I was attending the Vegas reunion with all the Karibukans of Jing Lomeda, Ditas los Banos, Totie Balce and Cora Tuanqui instead of our Ruby jubilee....how wrong it would have been!! I reasoned, that after all I see some classmates every now and then in Legaspi and besides I was there during our Silver

Jubilee...Dear classmates, bonding for me started much earlier. in the cyberspace!...my interchange of messages from Mila, Lolita, Nonong, Roderick, Chita, Maryann and few times with Amy were so addicting, like ammunitions, so powerful and dynamic...I just wanted to see them all! May 5 was a long wait indeed. I became restless and wanted to go....seemingly this explains why I was home earlier than the rest of the expats...there was no way I should miss this gathering in the world! I did not wait for my husband to tell me it is better to attend the Ruby Jubilee so I can visit my Pa and check our house at Sagpon. During Lolit's countdown, I knew there was no backing out...rain or shine, not even the SARS, war and terrorism can shatter my dream of meeting you all... my Sydneysider friends were worried and tried to discourage me from taking the trip...but I was determined and confident that the Lord God was with me in this sojourn.....and besides there was the intercessions of dear classmate Fr. Roderick Salazar SVD. I knew in my heart nothing will go wrong!

I was to be the advanced party. A month before departing Australia, I had the tape and CD for our dance music, mambo no.5 in my suitcase... bought those artificial Gumamelas at Westfield shopping mall. I chose 9 Latin skirts from my wardrobe to lend to classmates but it came out only Margie dared to wear one....Thanks Margs, at least my carrying those stuff was not in vain...Arrived Manila on Maundy Saturday. Attended Easter Mass at Malate church and was in Legaspi by Tuesday. As usual Josephine, my most loyal friend brought me around ...focus as we were with the jubilee celebration we went to cagsawa and then to kimantong to get those small red pamaypay for us Rubylarians, compliments of class'64. With those pamaypay in our hands I visualized, how colorful we will all be atop the Mazda truck of Quicoy Nidea during the motorcade, along with our be-flowered hats! Late afternoon of that same day I found myself attending the jubilee meeting presided by our dear Arlene Gojo with Marietta, Eliza and of course Josephine. After the meeting we went to have dinner. I savored my first halo-halo while the three enjoyed their evening meals.

Friday of that week I called for the first dance practice at Josephine's place complete with merienda compliments of Joe and Pin but unfortunately turned out to be more of talking and eating than dancing. With us was Agnes, who recently lost her husband from cancer and was chaperoned by her daughter and niece....I cried from within when I hugged her. Eliza, Marietta and Ameurfina were not wanting of suggestions for our presentation but of course I was very focused on the suggested theme of Manoy Rod which is the umu-ulau rouge and 'Something Stupid'. We practiced a few mambo steps. Somebody suggested of getting a DI to partner with me but I prophetically

said ‘Romelino is going to be my partner and he is good..’ While waiting for him to arrive bicol we were e-mailing each other everydayon the day he was to arrive, he e-mailed me that there was a traffic somewhere in Daraga. I told myself I can’t believe this!.... Knowing him as a military man I readied myself 10 minutes before he arrived to pick me up lest I get scolded by a colonel...My experience dancing with him was a very natural thing, it was as if we have danced before in our lifetime....He must be a born dancer, I reckon!

During my first week in Legaspi I did not waste time to look for classmates who were not in the list ...I went to Benito’s Bakery to see Victoria but was told by her brother Ching that she might not be interested as there is no San Miguel beer in St. Agnes. Of course it was a joke! I went back the next day and was met instead by her younger sister Mary Jane, who now has recovered from her illness and was very pleasant....I never saw Vicki...It was sad! I also contacted Mila Raquid, who came one time during our practice but not able to make it during the big day due to a previous commitment. I talked to Tito Velasco a few times who promised to attend. It was Alitoy Jaucian who advised me that Tito is sick and just had an operation and there is no way he will join us. ...I pondered that perhaps he is still living in a cocoon....Poor Fernando!

Off to Putiao Sorsogon I went with Ameurfina to visit my former staff who was to be professed as a nun in the Most Holy Trinity Reformation Centre and me being a benefactor. Ameurfina and myself were prayed over by a visiting healer priest from Manila and was treated for a merienda of champorado and tuyo, a beautiful humble gesture of the congregation indeed!....While there, we looked for another classmate Aurora Kalingasan. Funny that we did not know the last name of her husband so we have to stop several times to ask people if they know of a certain Aurora, who is a teacher with a mole in the face...On our fourth stop presto we found her fresh from her siesta! Aurora came on the actual day...how happy I felt ...I gave her my hat. In return she showed me the graduation photo I gave her 40 years ago... There was one more person to contact, and that was Dandy Garcia...a busy doctor and business lady that she is, I asked my friend Dr. Laurie Ludovice to help me get hold of her, who then got her phone and before I knew it there was Dandy’s voice...it was nice to hear her voice again, very enthused and excited to meet her elementary classmates. She joined our first bonding night...and the yummy fresh lumpia that I was craving to eat...I almost forgot, I also went to the LEALDA where Jean Baltazar works but was advised by a passerby that the office was still closed. I was disoriented with the time. I forgot that Philippine time is 2 hours earlier to Australia.

I was so focused with our classmates, all the other things I thought of doing did not matter. My Jayceerettes friends and cousins gave up looking for me. But on my last day in Legaspi I honored an invitation to the Magayon Festival to judge in a modern dance contest....I wondered how I did it because unknowingly I was dreaming of the beautiful SUNRISE and exotic SUNSET at Puro beach at Honey’s abode!

I did not forget however that I was in Legaspi to bond with my Pa who is 90 years old. In between classmates, I managed to spend quality time with him, telling him of my day to day activities and experiences with you guys. He was very keen with our preparations for the big day to have lent me his Mazda truck and his driver for the motorcade and giving instructions to have the truck fitted with iron benches. The big rope and plants were organized by Josephine’s staff.

I left Legaspi without saying goodbye not because I did not have time to but because I did not know how ...I was awfully sad....very sad! For a moment I went back to my cocoon and cried...I thought of St. Agnes Academy and my dear classmates whom I might not see for the next ten years. In Manila, I felt exhausted and changed my plan...I canceled the interview I was to make...I was not sure if I was in a state of nostalgia or euphoria....maybe both!

I am now back in Sydney, my second home but my thoughts are still very much with you, the beautiful bonding we had, singing, dancing, talking, laughing and eating! How will I ever forget those profound words of Alexis, the jokes and funny stories of Dandy, the impressive table setting and food service at Maryann’s mansion, how well instructed the maids were, not mentioning the native gourmets and all the meriendas and comidas...the endless photo takings of Mila, Erlinda’s guitar and rock and roll music, the meaningful homily of Fr. Rod, Chita’s teasing smiles, Marietta’s foresight and discipline putting all of us in order?

The week of togetherness transformed all of us into young girls, full of mischief once again. Who would think that we have passed mid life crisis? Especially when I greeted Ms Inos who pinched my legs for the short skirt...

I thank you dear classmates for letting me be witness of your girlishness and boyishness once again ...thank you for letting me feel that you treasured my company, thank you for letting me take a major part in the presentation, I know there may be better dancer among you but is just modest to show it, thank you for being a part of a cherished memory and bonding with me forever.

To each one I say these parting words:

Agnes- when I heard your voice.... yes, the same impressive Agnes diction during the Holy Mass, I thought of St. Scholastica’s College, the training and discipline we have had behind those thick walls. All the best to your Speech Clinic! Stay happy!

Alexis- You are not just a pretty face....thank you for sharing your thoughts and wisdom with me. Who will ever forget your graciousness and generosity?

Ameurfina- you touched my heart when you thank me for letting you copy my answers in Geometry in our 3rd year...I thought I should thank you instead for the stampitas, qiuamoy and dikiam you used to give me and above all your friendship!

Amy - I know that you were with us in Spirit.....hope you enjoy watching the video and see how we all look like at this point in time. I shall await your messages in the cyberspace. God bless!

Aurora- I was awed when you showed me those photos that you kept all these 40 years! You must be a very organized teacher....keep up!

Carmencita- You are very endearing...I like it when you call your friends BE, a short cut for BABY? I shall always remember your tugging along Eliza’s skirt and feeling lost when she is not around. Thank you for those hair clips....I am using them right now.

Chita- I am extremely proud to have you as a classmate and a friend. If only I can shout to the world your countless achievements and your gargantuan role in the field of education!

Dandy- I envy your sense of humor! Thank you for making me laugh and sharing your precious time with us, your classmates. I shall remember that 'tambutso' thing.

Eliza- Our bonding would not have been complete without your endless stories and narrations. I admire your being a true and loyal Agnesian! Please kiss the statue of St. Agnes for me. Thanks.

Elizabeth- You are as beautiful as I could remember. Take time to pamper yourself now that you are single again. Make the most of your time because life is but a flash in the sky and like a bubble in the stream!

Eriberta- Who would think that you are a retired bank teller? I honestly feel it is a bit too early for you to be a 'woman of leisure' or are you still honeymooning with your new husband? I know you are making up for the lost time!

Erlinda- I am hats off to your talent...Praise the Lord for your beautiful music...I will miss your funny antics! Take care that you don't encounter the aswangs in Rapu-rapu!

Joy- You are a real joy indeed ! very pleasant to look at...an epitome of an accomplished woman, happy about herself..

Lita- God bless you in your loving and peaceful existencesingle blessedness is a very noble vocation. I could see you dot on your lovely niece seated next to me during the mass.

Lolit- You are such a darling! I am very impressed with those offerings...they were intricately done! Surely, we will continue to bond in the internet.

Lourdes- Thank you for helping in the wrappings for the merienda...very please to see you after all these years. Cheers.

Marietta- Thank you for the time you spent with me from day one...I will cherish that short stroll we had in Legaspi looking for a quality empanada and ensaymada. Hope you pray for me, a fellow SODALIST...Is Cicero keeping your sodality medal?

Margie- Very much the sweet Margie that I knew from the Kindergarten days at St. John's Academy in Camalig...how will I forget the accordion of your Papa accompanying us in a dance with classmate Delfin Yuhico Jr?

Maryann- You proved to be the perfect hostess....I was quite shock though with your impeccable lady-like demeanor. You were sweet and lovely far from what I thought in our youth!

Mila Alvarez- I will forever remember that one short bonding night sleeping in your room at Maryann's. Did we talk about our love life?

Mila Raquid- I understand your involvement in a very noble cause: The Mayon Child Welfare Foundation, keeping wayward children out of the street. Keep up the good work! Thank you for coming and bond with us in one of the dance practices.

Nelly- Thank you for your creative input in covering those giant fans with red and gold.....I understand you're not able to participate. I will pray for your health concerns and fast recovery!

PG- Indeed you were missed! Hope to be able to bond with you in a special way. Meantime I will await your greetings in the internet.

Romelino- what else can I say partner? Please continue to send your naughty jokes...they are very amusing but please don't annoy me with the 'belo' thing. Okay?

Roderick- Isn't that we, your classmates are allowed to call you by your first name during bonding sessions? Thank you for your words of wisdom.! Looking forward to the pose you promised me...in Pinas or in Sydney....meantime stay sweet and charming! BTW be a good boy!

Rowena- It was a most pleasant surprise to see you, knowing that you are working in Manila with Effie Jean....I dearly hope we will have more time to catch up with each other soon!

Virginia (Jean)- thank you for being a friend as always! Hope to see you every now and then when I am in Legaspi. Take care of your apo.. Your daughter has grown to be very lovely!

Wilma- I like to salute a very efficient teacher like you! One day you will encounter your second husband ...be prepared and keep smiling because you are beautiful!

In CLOSING let me say, that like the CADENA DE AMOR, a chain of petite delicate flowers, never nurtured and pruned yet grows and blooms beautifully and so with YOU, ME and US dear classmates....we might not see each other tomorrow and the years to come but the love is there ALIVE and GROWING because ours is a bonding that will forever be... A BONDING OF A LIFETIME!

Do you remember:

Med Vallejo

The date of our first communion!!

Or the brothers Rey, sons of Gracita..have you heard the story of the shoes that were thrown in the river behind St. Agnes..or the time they went to their mom who was in a CWL meeting and they had the portion of a finger that was detached (!) as they were playing.

What were their names. Do you remember?

The lady who would sleep walk in the dorm and we would put planganas around her bed.

Or the dorm girls caught eating pancit after 9 p.m.. Sr. Godeharda caught us dancing with the noodles in one hand and a slice of bread in the other..oh my Yoly Pobre and Noemi Arcilla have stories to tell wonder if Benny was with us.

Or Beth and the wonderful effects of mirrors on the floor ..while Sr Irmburg was in the classroom..

Or the canteen behind our classroom where we had easy access to food..

The bicycle that brought Sr. Godeharda to the convent

The violin that Sr Diethilde played

The car accident of Sr Kuniberta

The rosy cheeks of Sr. Firmina

The gentle voice of Sr Christophora

The platform and finger signs of Sr Annuntiata

The look of Sr Soledad that said it all..and the smiles that came so seldom so they were quite precious..

Was it Sr. Lucila who was your principal..

Maricoi Garchitorena

Living in St. Agnes dorm was at first like a prison to me till I met good friends like Totie Balce, Jean Clemente, Tita Duran, Cecile Manalac and Tips Busmente. During those times these ladies were well behaved, but not I. I was very "pilya" and boy crazy. Studying was the last thing in my agenda. I was crazy about a boy named Periking Torella but now I can't even remember how he looks like. I always told Totie all about my escapades when I spend the weekend with Jean Baltazar or Agnes Aguilar. I enjoyed going to parties with both Jean and Agnes. MaryAnn and I were always in trouble with Sister Irmburg. I had fun during volleyball practices with MaryAnn, Alexis and Mila. When we had open house, Elisa and I enjoyed flirting with the boys. Those were the good old days, just clean fun! The only time a boy could hold my hand was during dancing time.

Graduation time I told Totie that we will meet in Manila, but I did my own thing and did not see any of my St. Agnes friends till 32 years later in the Las Vegas reunion. One thing I can say about Agnesians when they get together is that they are still friendly and are humble human beings. Walang kayabangan. My husband really enjoyed meeting y'all...

With my mom's prayer and the nuns' upbringing I turned out okay. Married a great man! Ron and I have been married for 34 years with one son who graduated from college majoring in Biology and is working at Lexmark in Lexington KY. One thing I can be proud of is my son , Ronnie, who has never given us any problem or reason to cry while living with us or even now that he is living on his own. I want him to marry a Filipina but he is crazy dating blondes and redheads. He loves dating tall girls (5'10 or 5'11) - those are his type. Now it's my turn to pray that Ronnie will meet a good girl that will love him and treat him good.

Last thing I have to say I am very proud to be an Agnesian.

Memories are Made of These!

Romeo R. Gojo SAA GS Class '60

Recess time and favorite balon is Pan de Sal with Star Margarine and plenty of pulang ASUKAR.

Breakfast with plateful of Sinanlag na Bahaw na naglalangoy sa sarong tasang mainit na CAFE PURO.

Taking meals with gusto con todo de karamutan, nakataas pa ang bitis, mientras fuerte ang pakilaban kang mga langaw sa YAWYAW.

Merienda time with Champurado with Gatas Evaporada and Tinapa or Tuyo or at best - Tapang Baka na pinatuyo sa atup na yero.

Corned Beef, not in the can, but which one buys in the mercado or SA'RAN, na mamula-mula pa, with the LITID and very juicy and not dry.

Going to the SAOD either in Daraga or Legazpi with that round wicker Basket you carry in your arm for your purchases of sira - Bangkulis, Turingan, Bataway, Sapsap, Lapu-Lapu, Bangus, Sibubog, Tilapia, Hito, Dalag or Pating - or the BAYONG for the live MANOK - making sure to make HOLES on the side.

Snack time of HEMO which you eat or PAPAK and not drink or pieces of M Y SUN Crackers or SALTINE and dose it with loads of SENORITA CONDENSADA.

Getting cupfuls of Bagas from the sako or balde kang Purico, put them in the BILAO, then make HIMASI to remove the scraps of Pasi, stones, worms or even PAKO.

Paying a fare of only P0.05 or P0.10 from Daraga to Legazpi on those public transport buses - AA Lines or Montallana - and you can stop them at will at any place, just by screaming PARRAAAAA! (How RUDE, indeed!)

When the Church Bells ring at 6:00 pm (or was it 5:00 pm) and the whole world stops - jeepneys, buses, vendors, pedestrians - to pray the ANGELUS -(You can hear a PIN drop!) - and then you run to your Papa and Mama and LOLO and LOLA to make MANO PO!

Going to Mass on Sundays - in your SUNDAY'S BEST - and really mean it - with that ubiquitous BELO for the women in all its glorious colors and designs, shapes and sizes.

COLOR-CODING which was started by the Devotees to the Patron Saints - Brown on Tuesdays for San Antonio; Blue for the Mother of Perpetual Help on Wednesdays; Green for St. Joseph, with the Scapular and Cords worn around the waist.

Parishioners coming to Church with their Rosaries -some even perfumed - and SUNDAY MISSALS, and making sure they fast THREE HOURS before receiving HOLY COMMUNION.

Priests saying the Holy Mass with their backs to the congregation so as to confirm that they really are priests as indicated by their TONSURES or IRIKS. Of course, the Priests do wear the SUTANA underneath.

No one can be more MULTI-LINGUAL than having the Mass in LATIN, the Priest delivering his sermon in BICOL and the faithful singing the hymns in ENGLISH.

DOCTORS do house calls then, to include Dr. Cesar Duran, Dr. Damaceno Ago, Dr. Rodrigo Salazar, Dr. Totoy Roces, Dr. Matias, Dr. Del Rosario, and others - with their Black Bags and all - to treat your Flu, Mumps, Chicken Pox, Small Pox - and you GET WELL - with no Medical Insurance coverage, no up-front payment, no CO-payment, just a SMILE and THANK YOU, PADI!

Alternative medicine came in the form of TANGLAD, LAKAD-BULAN, ARTAMISA and dahon ning BAYAWAS. Of course, the never fail - LABATIBA - using that white porcelain canister with that undulating rubber tubing - until the present day disposable ENEMAS came to be.

Treating all our ailments with just CORTAL and ASPIRIN, bathing with LUX, CAMAY, PALMOLIVE or LIFEBOY, brushing our teeth with COLGATE, using THAT toothbrush TO DEATH - and no DENTAL FLOSSING (what's that?????) Shall I include the PANGHILOD picked from the salog or the baybay.

Writing was at its peak - with tons of letters being exchanged among friends and relatives, making a beeline at the RCPI for those urgent messages or long-distance calls - and everyone was still kept informed about anything and everything - sans EMAILS, CELL PHONES, PAGERS and BEEPERS.

The luxury of having your clothes tailored - Jecks Tailoring, Buitre's Tailoring, or one's dresses made by the signature designs of MAMENG REYES, MRS. VIDAL - or beauty treatment at the salons of MONILLA, NATALIA, or PURING MENDOZA.

The local traditions of the KINURUBONGS, DASOLCA, AURORA, SIETE PALABRAS, VISITA IGLESIAS, the Lenten PRUSISYONS, especially in Daraga, a long trek from the Church up on the hill, downward to the streets of Ilawod, passing by the ancestral house of the JAUCIANS and ARBOLEDAS, and making the privileged honor of walking behind the SANTO ENTIERRO of the Banks Family, with a sonorous BANDA in their white uniform. Oh, all the candles flickering at nightfall and saving all those droppings to make one big WAX BALL.

Television was not in vogue then, so we relish the time spent listening to the radio programs - Gabi ng Shell, Gabi Ng Lagim, Mga Kwento ni Lola Basyang, Mga Reyna ng Vicks, Mga Liham kay Tiya Dely, Tawag ng Tanghalan, Ang Tatay Kong Kalbo with Pugo, Sylvia la Torre, Oscar Obligacion - and the rest of the comedians - Patsy, Aruray, Chichay, Dely Atay-atayan, Lopito, Pugak and Tugak, Bentot, Bayani Casimiro, Dolphy and Panchito, Chiquito and singers like Bobby Gonzales, Carina Afable, and Katy de la Cruz.

How simple life was - a stroll in the park in Daraga and Capitol, a sniff of the sea breeze at the Pier, a bite at Buban's or Pete's Place, a date at Rex or Lola Theater, Plaza or Cine Madrid, a Novena at the Redemptorist Church in Gogon, social events at the Camara, Bingo at the Ritz Hotel, Saturday night out at the Penthouse, El Casino or El Nido, errands to the Botica Duran, shopping at Ever Bazaar or Saty's, excursions to Rocamonte or Kawilihan Bicol, the mouth-watering PINANGATS of Camalig, the studentry of St. Agnes Academy, Liceo de Albay, Legazpi College, Albay High School, United Institute, MLQ Institute, Bicol Colleges, Premier Secretarial School, Legazpi Chinese School -

How Sweet, How Nostalgic, How Divine!

P.S.

Ms. Elle (magayunon baga pag-dangugon),

Dr. Martinez was never our 'attending physician' kaya siguro I failed to mention him (kaibanan na siya sa 'others'). As for Cine Najar, I only watch there kung starring su mga IDOLS ko - ROSA MIA and ETANG DISCHER, ZENY ZABALA and BELLA FLORES! Bako sana su mga sublat - pati GRABENG INIT! Kaya dapat may balon kang PAYPAY o kaya su CARDBOARD kang PAD PAPER. Pagluwas mo sa sinehan, dumugon ka na sa daplos, MABATAON ka pa sa parong kang sigarilyo, nag-iristom na su liog mo, su bado mo gari hale sa ropero. Pati mga mata, NAGPURULA NA! Garo dae pa kaidto ki VISINE Eyedrops. And then, kung mabakal ka ki TICKET sa Cine, grabeng TURUCLANGAN, SURU-SUAN, IRINUTAN sa tukawan. Abo mo na kutang mag-hiling pero nadadangog mo sa LOUD-SPEAKER sa luwas na NAGBABARADILAN na sara FPJ and ZALDY ZHORNACK (tama ba ang spelling), kaya dalagan ka man lugod sa laog kang sine. And when the LIGHTS go on, WOW! Ituon palan sa BALCONY si KUNYAN - NAG-DATE! TSISMIS KAMO! And after the show, either MAGNOLIA ICE-CREAM muna kara Simeon Prieto or better yet, LEGAZPI RESTAURANT for the Pansit, Siopao, o Camaron Rebusado!

O sige na ta ANGELUS na! Roms

Nuggets from Bonita Arevalo Medrano:

TO KNOW ALL IS TO FORGIVE ALL

If I knew you and you knew me -
If both of us could clearly see,
And with an inner sight divine
The meaning of your heart and mine -
I'm sure that we would differ less
And clasp our hands in friendliness;
Our thoughts would pleasantly agree
If I knew you, and you knew me.

If I knew you and you knew me,
As each one knows his own self, we
Could look each other in the face
And see therein a truer grace.

Life has so many hidden woes,
So many thorns for every rose;
The "why" of things our hearts would see,
If I knew you and you knew me.
- nixon waterman

FRIENDS COLOR LIFE WITH JOY

Friendship is God's way of loving us through someone else

Friendship, love and warmth are tied forever with the
heartstrings of our memories

Life is to be fortified by many friendships.
To love and to be loved is the greatest happiness of existence.

Sydney Smith (1771-1845)

CONFIDE IN A FRIEND

When you're tired and worn at the close of day
And things just don't seem to be going your way,
When even your patience has come to an end,
Try taking time out and confide in a friend.

Perhaps she too may have walked the same road
With a much troubled heart and burdensome load,
To find peace and comfort somewhere near the end,
When she stopped long enough to confide in a friend.

For then are most welcome a few words of cheer,
For someone who willingly lends you an ear.
No troubles exist that time cannot mend,
But to get quick relief, just confide in a friend.
- author unknown

Tamen Pardo

Dear Friendship BOOK:

I have a big pain in my heart since I was a teenager and I have to say it now or never. I must speak now that I can confide with you my friendship book. Because we are friends I hope you understand my concern and maybe I am not late yet to know who the mysterious person is.

Don't remember whether it was in my sophomore, junior or senior year. Maybe it was when I was in second year high school, who knows, when Sister Godeharda, she was the Directress then, called me and my parents to her office. You can imagine my shock!! I was thinking: "What did you do wrong, Tamen, for your parents to be called to the Directress Office?" I accept I was naughty, but in a clean naughtiness way. "Ma daldalun, merry and gay type of naughtiness" Never BAD a good Sodality Member, a good Child of Mary at that. Of course no reason for me to be called WITH MY PARENTS to the Directress Office. I was really puzzled, worried and scared..

When I entered her office Sister Godeharda, and my parents gave me the third degree treatment. "Do you have a boyfriend? Does anyone send you secret messages? Are you aware of any guy following you? And poor innocent Tamen just replied as sincere as always: NO, NO, NO It was true I did not know of anyone flirting with me. I WISH I KNEW! And that was all. Palan there were some love letters that Sister Godeharda confiscated and censored which I never received. They tore it , inapon sa waste basket and here I am at the age of 66 still thinking. "Sisay kaya ang lalake na nag padara sako kang love letters na ito." I wish I knew.

Of course I am happily married but still that episode of my life was and still is a pain in my heart. I have a strong desire to know : "Sisay kaya ang secret lover ko when I was young." I hope he is happy. I hope he found somebody to love him dearly. And I hope to know who he was.

I told my parents later that they should never have made those letters disappear; it was part of my growing up and it was nice to know there was someone after me.

So you see, dear Friendship Book, I hope that by corresponding with you, some of that pain will disappear, some of that burden will fly away. And if my secret love when I was young reads this I want him to know I never received or read his letters. And that because of his letters I got the biggest scare in my life at Sister Godeharda's office.

Take care my dear secret love; I wish you all the best in life - I hope you found a good partner, a partner as true and as lovable as my dear husband is now.

Take care, lovingly

Tamen

How I Started Having Friends.....

In Grade School, we used to look like HS, at 5'4 in height and slim looking, with all the Agnesian beauty we've got, we were the soccer belles....

hello to you my sweet smelling-soccer friends!

Emily Maravillas, MaryAnne Domingo, Ruby Rogacion, Myrna Serrano, Maricel Se, Meg Los Banos, Marilyn Espedillion

with our boy soccer counterparts, Elmer Pecson, Luis and Noel del Rio, Eduardo Crisol, Allan Yu, Bert Gonzales, Ramon Estevez, Stephen Tanchuling.....they where shorter, we were all taller than them!

Moving on to High School, we still carried our ball, this time we shifted to Volleyball!

We were the BIG GIRLS, actually the tall ones in the class and we had a group named JERMIC! But among this 10 big girls, at 1st and 2nd year HS, we had one petite girl with us....so here goes!

J - Joselina Julian

E- Elizabeth Serra

R- Ruby Rogacion, Rosalinda Castro and Ruth Rayel, the "petite one"

M- Myrna Serrano and Maricel Se

I - Indra Menghamal

C- Cathy de los Reyes and Carmina Acuna

Carmina, was the Mommy in the group, so she just cheered for us since she never really played the game!

As I moved on to 3rd year HS, the JERMIC was much around, but our group was becoming bigger - looks like the whole class were our friends!

No we didn't make the acronyms this time, we just had some people among us, more into sports and CAT! But I noticed there was shifting from sports inclination to Dance, Arts, Glee Club, but I stayed on with playing more of volleyball and soccer, to trek my way to be the Sports President in 4th Year..ha ha ha hidden agenda indeed! That's what we call planning one's career... he he he

Closeness with Liza Baldo, Bennice Alvarado, Noemi Bea...new friends found, new secrets unfolded! Oh those long letter exchanges we had with Liza and Bennice! Weren't you tired reading them!

At another year, I was mingling with Emily Maravillas, Mary Anne Domingo, and other volleybelles from Camalig! My my, it was fun being with them running here and there!

Here were the beautybelles, Ning Mendez, Dina Bonnevie, Yenyen Apilado, Gina Buenviaje, Gigi Quiogue and sorry I forgot her first name, Ms. Hemady! Ouch, I was not "in" their group, but we were in our CAT platoon and we had fun together! We were promoted from the last platoon of the 1st company (Charlie) to the 2nd platoon of the Alpha Company! Those drills we had and the CAT Tactical Inspection....it was my best year in HS!

Baby, do you remember that initiation we had, I was the assigned Sgt at Arms, the one alone and ahead of the pack! You were beside me and really you did a lot of coaching for me! Why? Remember, I just had my mumps then which caused the partial deafness in my right ear! That meant I couldn't hear all the "calls" made! At one time, the leader in 4th year, instructed to make an about face, not knowing, I was back to back with the platoon and when the leader called march forward, I was marching separately from the pack! And the whole pack was marching in unison against me! Kakahiya!

Then we moved on to the Bicol University for the Officers Training! Wow! This was going to be outside the SAA grounds, and how could I possibly make it, but there was you my friend, we were always beside each other because of our height and we all made it!

Nyhria, with all your grace, we had also coaching how to read your calls since I was now with the Alpha Company, 2nd platoon under Dina B. Remember, we made some counting after each call you shouted really loud for me to hear the echo! With both of you very supportive of my disability, we became the Model Platoon! That was a showmanship of THIS ABILITY!

The intramurals, how could anyone forget this event! Meg, you always showed the best form! Gigi Samson, who could tell you can run too! Ay su mga cheerleaders pa, the human pyramid! Kami mga dagul pirmi nasa hirarom, mga madeform na mga likod mi sa mga tuhod kan mga classmates! We were 2nd best, next the Juniors who run away with the trophy even before it was handed by Sr. Lucy, tapos after the event which our Sports Club organized, ay sus ta nag-general assembly kita the following day, ta pinadagitan pa ni Sr. Lucy!

After HS graduation, I never had any news from my friends, we used to see and hang out if time permitted during Christmas vacations, but we all, or was it I, who really focused studying and had no contact with all of you.

Until I work in Jollibee, one friendly birthday greeting surprised me! Hello from Baby (Myrna) Serrano! You are indeed so sweet my friend....it made me realized then, wow, how I missed my HS friends!

After the Silver Jubilarians homecoming in 2002, it is indeed payback time...to catch up with friends, to help and support each other, to become not only classmates, but prayer warriors and friends!

Now, I begin my "youthfulness" at 44, knowing better, listening more, and being supportive of friends, in prayers and text messaging....I begin to see through behind my boisterous laughter in HS, the joy of listening to our friends' life after SAA..and life going back and giving back to SAA and the country.

Cathy de los Reyes-Orbigo

GS 74 - HS 78

To My Dear Friends in Grade School Batch '74 and High School Batch '78,

I dedicate this article to all of you...

I am ever grateful for all the love and support you have given me during those times we were all growing up together...

Thank you, thank you!

Mwahh! Love you all!

Cathy de los Reyes- Orbigo

Benedictine Bonds

by Gladys Gregorio Fantillo

How apt that I should be writing this on the Sunday of the 77th Academy Awards telecast in the U.S. As winners accept their Oscars and articulate their gratitude to the people who helped them along the way to the pinnacle of their careers, I am likewise digging deep into my memory bank for the faces and names of the girls who comprised the student population at St. Agnes' Academy during the time I was there, 1963 - 1967, easily the most memorable and character-building years of my young life.

Because I grew up in a predominantly fishing/farming town that, although just 12 kilometers from Legazpi City, at the time had neither electricity nor phone lines (formerly known as Libog, meant to have an accent on the first syllable, later changed by town officials to its current name -- Sto. Domingo -- due to the former's unsavory Tagalog connotation), my freshman year at SAA was my first exposure to another world.

My reminiscing inevitably takes me back to the day incoming freshmen had to hurdle entrance exams. Of my classmates, Mercy Nimo was the first one I met, as we sat in adjacent desks while we navigated the lengthy tests.

The first week of school I remember too well Marichu Kare, a senior then, who stormed into our classroom at recess and demanded, "Sisay an Gladys Gregorio saindo?" Too timid to respond to her myself, a couple of my classmates pointed to my direction, after which she continued, "Oragon ka, dinaog mo su Valedictorian kan Grade VI mi!" That was how I learned that I tied for first place with Mercedes "Ditas" Los Banos (the results of the entrance exams were posted on the bulletin board in the hall that day).

So it went that I gravitated towards the fun people in my class who welcomed me into their circle. All through my freshman and sophomore years I amassed wonderful memories that always included Judith Dy (who was gutsy enough to be driving at that tender age and would often take the gang joy riding), Ditas Los Banos (who made possible watching free movies at the Rex Theater), Carmen "Mita" Velasco (who gave me countless free rides to school in their chauffeur-driven car), Nelia Munoz, Claudia Guarte, Theresa Arjona, Angelita "Lite" Arroyo, Lourdes Amorsolo.

Then, for reasons I vaguely remember now, my inner circle turned into a different and smaller group as I advanced to my junior and senior years. My bosom buddies at that stage included sweet-faced Elizabeth "Beth" Bailon, bedimpled Norma Cajayon, Delia Benitez, and the late Nora Lledo (deceased 1985) who was the other half of the duet we became, as I honed my guitar-playing skills and we mimicked The Beatles who were the center of our juvenile adulation. To this day, Nora comes to mind often as I listen to 60s music and my thoughts are transported through time to those mellow afternoons when we would head for Little Baguio and sing the hours away by the tiny creek.

All throughout, there were always upperclassmen who stood out - Class 64's Rosemary "Totie" Balce whose prowess at the piano accompanied our rendering of the national anthem each school day; Joy Estevez and Susan Garcia, captivating dancers who were such a visual delight as they practiced their BACS Meet number; Josephine Locsin who seemed to be president of every student organization there was; Barbara Magdaraog whose halo, even then, was already apparent ...

Class '65 gave us Jean Benito and Amy Manila who were unforgettable in their roles in "The King and I"; Cecilia "Jing" Lomeda who seemed to be the best-known Blue Dove even outside the campus; Mediatrix "Med" Vallejo who was unbeatable at table tennis (pingpong); Imelda "Emy" Armena who was a BACS Meet Spelling Bee champ ... Was it Rosemary Salazar who grilled us, "Spanish Inquisition" type, before we could be accepted as a Sodalist?

The group of Ellen Estevez, Betty Duran, Elsie Yee, Grace Munoz, Mellie Millete, and the late Agnes Torrella are the faces that easily come to mind at the mention of Class '66 ... Similarly, I remember best Angelica "Jing" Calleja, Gloria Jaucian, Nitz Alvarado, Ellen Manjares, Nancybelle Gonzaga, Phoebe Guiriba, Baby Torella of Class 68 ... Not to forget the popular trio of Class 69, Boots Yuhico, Maris Kare, and Nene Calleja ...

Too, there were those who impressed me in some other way, like my classmate Clarissa Opeda who was the only girl I remember who had the guts to poke fun at the tall and strict Sr. Godeharda while the rest of us shook with trepidation when she stealthily sneaked behind us or called us with her unique and ominous come-hither pointing

finger! All of us definitely remember that it took just one clap of her hands to silence a whole campus of chattering females. Was it during her reign that our favorite snack food, butong pakwan (guatchi), was banned inside the campus after the school grounds were almost fully covered with discarded black seeds?

Who could forget the mentors? Everyone has her personal favorites and my list starts with our English teacher Ms. Armida Corral who provided the greatest encouragement for me to give writing a shot. The late Ms. Ayque made learning Pilipino easy and fun, the same way Ms. Rellosa guided us through the intricacies of Algebra and Trigonometry. To this day I still recall Ms. Inday Onate's final test in World History - maps of countries that we had to identify. My deepest appreciation though goes to Ms. Corazon Alcera who poured in unpaid hours and lots of patience to train me for months leading to a CEAL Meet Spelling gold medal.

And those other German nuns like the sweet Sr. Christophora whose nurturing warmth was perfect for fainthearted freshmen; the beautiful Sr. Frideswida who was such an inspiration during our sophomore year; the amiable Sr. Firmina who guided us juniors until we became seniors under the tutelage of Sr. Frideswida once again - their faces are indelibly etched in my mind. Just now the thought of diminutive Sr. Anunciata popped up, including the stool she used to stand on while she led our practice of Glee Club songs.

The virtues of discipline and respect for rules and authority are main character traits that I attribute learning much of from the Benedictine Order. Back then, who would have thought that the simple act of lining up at recess for the canteen (under the watchful eyes of Seniors who made sure nobody cut in front of others) would prepare us for order in the real world? Or how the school policy of "No Speaking Bicol" in the campus would train us into forming even our thoughts in English, thus paving the way for facility with the language?

Too, the habit of being prayerful instilled in us then, stays with us through life. Even now, the daily rosary required of Sodalists serves me well. I find that saying a few decades while waiting for the bus or train, or during any idle time for that matter, dispels impatience.

Graduations inevitably happened each end of a school year ... We sobbed as we said goodbye to our graduating friends ... Then our turn came and bawled as we said goodbye to each other and those we left behind ... College, first job, career, marriage, babies, migration ... Friendships had to go through a dormant cycle ... Then, just when you have started to wonder about old high school chums, the notification of your 25th high school reunion comes ... You agonize over the decision to go and come up with a variety of excuses not to go (you're embarrassingly overweight, incredibly busy, disappointingly unsuccessful) but you fly home anyway ...

Followed the rekindling of alliances ... Reconnecting with long lost pals ... I am grateful for being "adopted" by certain members of Class 65 like Jing Lomeda, Nenette Zapanta, Cora Tuanqui, Elsie Ludovice, Amy Manila, Cecile de Vera, Emy Armena, Fe Tablizo, Vi Gonzaga, and Beth Aycardo ...

Ecstatic that I have formed closer friendships with fellow Class 67ers Susan Arboleda, Lorie Zamora, Baby Mesa who happens to be the only one of my friends who went to the same schools I attended (SD Elementary, SAA, and Aquinas U), Theresa Arjona, Claudia Guarte, Gigi Goyena, Nancy Layson, and Melba Mercado ... That they make time to get together with me when I visit, makes me feel the intervening years of absences do not really matter ... We just continue where we left off ...

With the advent of the internet, friendships have become global ... Mila Alvarez's timely creation of the Pinangat web site has provided us with a wonderful medium of keeping in touch, a way of tracking long lost classmates that seems to give credence to the theory of the Six Degrees of Separation, allowing us to be supportive of those among us who are experiencing sickness and death in their families with prayers, an opportunity to get to know Agnesians of all generations ... Alexis Munoz's dream of a Friendship Book is coming to fruition made possible by the quick dissemination of information via the email loop ... Love the daily dose of laughter and forwarded words of wisdom plus cautionary tales ...

To quote from a recent article on friendship ... "We act as memory, as witnesses to our own history, and that is a great gift. Before, we needed each other to solve problems, not only to live with us, but also to tell us how to live. Now we know most problems in life are insoluble and we no longer need each other to do anything. Just being there is enough. Knowing there is someone who knows you, someone who looks at you and sees not only what you've become but who you were is enormously important."

We all take different paths in life but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere.

Friendship lives forever,
As long as we exist...
You may not see me.
I may not see you either,
But the essence of our friendship
Will see us through."

Dearest Ruby (Rogacion), Mary-Ann (Domingo), Elizabeth (Serra), Luis (del Rio), Noel (Del Rio) and Elmer (Pecson),

Remember our Fridays in Grade School? Hay, we were the cleaners!
But we had the boys helping us wax the floors!
Come Monday, we are to scrub the floors again...
Maybe it was a treat to stay a little longer in school to avoid errands at home but the truth was....
To be with the boys! Of course not...this is just reminiscing!

The boys? they were really boys, because we were taller than them! They were not so serious
Really, all they want with us was fun too. As we were all growing up, I felt we treated them
With respect and maturely kaya baga daiman kita pigkarawan, but instead they shared their
Thoughts and feelings about their growing up and our other classmates whom they can approach
As they were to us.

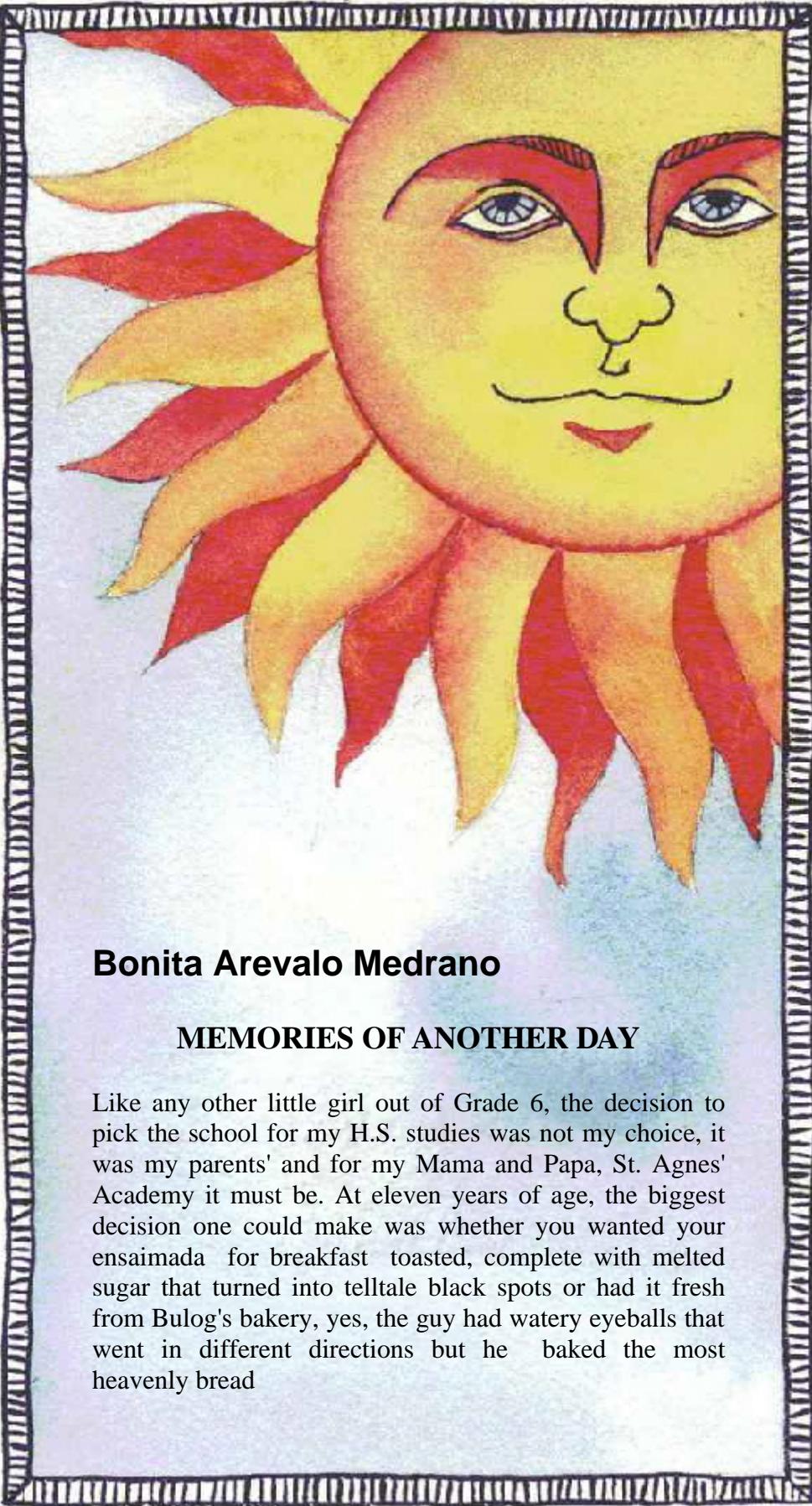
After the Friday cleaning, nagsawa na kita, halat bako nakahalata kita,
Na pirmi na lang kita naging cleaners?
What happened next, puro naman soccer!
Hala, mabataon kung maguruli na, ta puro daplos baga!
Kaya pirmi ako nakukudut na maligaon daa!

Bata baga an si Mary-Anne, mauli pa sa Sto. Domingo,
Marhay ika ta malakaw na sana pa Vel-Amor Subd., Si Elizabeth
Di sundo pa ki kotse,
Ako? Sa Guinobatan pa! Kaya turogun ako nagpatok-patok
Ang payo ko kun dai man su payo ko pirmi minasandal sa
Mga shoulder kan kataig ko, ay kudut naman ako kan tugang ko!

Now that we are in our "youth" once again, ang age ta baga,
"life begins at...." O di young again!,
Agom mo si Jobert, nephew ko, ay garo niece naman kita,
Ha ha from friends in GS/HS, magpinsan naman kita.

We are now walking through life as real co-family..even from a distance...
Ruby, I am very happy to have you in our Anson Clan, as a longtime friend
And erstwhile classmate!

Mwahhhh!
Cathy de los Reyes Orbigo



Bonita Arevalo Medrano

MEMORIES OF ANOTHER DAY

Like any other little girl out of Grade 6, the decision to pick the school for my H.S. studies was not my choice, it was my parents' and for my Mama and Papa, St. Agnes' Academy it must be. At eleven years of age, the biggest decision one could make was whether you wanted your ensaimada for breakfast toasted, complete with melted sugar that turned into telltale black spots or had it fresh from Bulog's bakery, yes, the guy had watery eyeballs that went in different directions but he baked the most heavenly bread

we called "dudo-dudo" , not that his creation looked like breasts but that the two tips were shaped like nipples. The children in our family, or every kid in every household in San Jacinto, Masbate, for that matter, loved dunking this side of the bread on a cup of aromatic café de arroz and then sucked it with gusto! All the buena familia in my town sent their precious daughters to become colegialas, and so why should I be any different, my parents decided. Besides they felt I was getting too spoiled (being the youngest of nine) and too headstrong, it was better if I were with the madres. They would instill discipline in this girl and turned this piece of carbon into diamond. DISCIPLINA MILITAR is what a girl like me needed. And so with that in mind, off they sent me to St. Agnes. That moment in time was the most wrenching in my young life, my first taste of REAL sorrow and pain. To be removed from all that was familiar to you, to be taken away from that cocoon of love and indulgence and faced a new strange world was unspeakable anguish I could share with all those young girls who were torn from their families in pursuit of better schooling and discipline. With tears rolling down my cheeks I bade a silent good-bye to our old ancestral house. I wanted so badly to wrap my arms around its posts and never let go when it was time for me to leave, cry at the highest crescendo my vocal chords would allow and be dragged kicking and screaming, but then abandoned the idea because I was scared it would be too melodramatic and would scandalize the whole neighborhood. Instead I moved about quietly, resigned to my fate, whispered my farewell to the old manzanitas tree I used to climb, stroked our dog's hair with more tenderness, gazed sadly at the faces of doting grandparents, uncles and aunts and even the domestic helpers. Will I see them again? In truth, I was catatonic with grief.

But the single heaviest blow to me was the separation from my mother. Mama was the one constant in my life, I wouldn't know how to face the world without her by my side. It is said that the youngest has a very special bond with its mother, probably it's the realization that this child is the last and that's what makes it very precious to a mother's heart. But here I was, in front of St. Agnes, about to enter its portals - ALONE. To say that my emotions were mixed was an understatement, they were like pyrotechnics, I stood there, fascinated, terrified, thrilled, afraid, curious, weak, debating with myself whether I should enter or should run away. Too late. I caught the eye of Sister Godeharda. It was the bluest, clearest of eyes I had ever seen. They held me enthralled. As I stood there mesmerized not only by her eyes but also by her attire, I knew there and then here was a person who will not suffer spoiled brats like me gladly. That encounter was a defining moment. Without saying a word this towering figure above me made it clear that what worked with my indulgent parents will not work here, my antics in my doting household will not be tolerated here and so the demarcation line was set, a line that I should not cross. Dared I? But cross I did, whether by sheer mischief, bullheadedness, defiance or by some form of early rebellion. Looking back now, it was not really like, we girls did it out of sheer malice and we set about doing things because we wanted to deliberately hurt anyone. We were just naughty, mischievous girls of our age who were having fun and that's what made high school the most unforgettable years of our lives. The time when the hunt for a husband was not even a gleam in our eyes, the time when what and how to put food on the table never crossed our minds, the time when VAT, mortgage, peso-dollar exchange, capital gains tax and stock market were non-existent issues for us. In short, life was simpler then, it was a stress-free existence. The happiest and the best.

We are so thankful that our so-called "baptism of fire" in our Freshman Year came in the hands of the gentle Sister Christophera. She was a roly-poly nun with a round face that was a picture of kindness. Sr. Christophera was so nice it seemed so wrong to hurt her feelings by being naughty or rowdy, although I suspect I did when she caught me in religion class swinging the rosary with my foot in wild abandon! When we crossed her, her face became serious, pursing her lips (but never in a terrifying way, but rather in a cute, lovable way) and admonishing us gently and calling each one of us, "child", her own term of endearment. The freshman year is the first uneasy step we took on the road to H.S. and some of us, like me, were "provincianas" (when seen in the light of Legaspi being a city and when most of our classmates being already by then hardened veterans of St. Agnes, having been there since grade school)

who were wide-eyed with wonder and fear at such a new experience of being under the tutelage of nuns, and Germans at that. But Sr. Christophera, God bless her kind soul, made the transition easy. We, the out-of-towners, were missing our moms and dads terribly or barring that, our dogs, but our freshman year would always stand out because there was a sister who made our first year a non-traumatic event.

It could have been our hormones or it could have been Sister Irmburg but Sophomore Year was the wildest, naughtiest, rowdiest time of our lives. For some inexplicable reason, she brought out the devil in us. There was Mary Ann Pineda hanged by Sr. Irmburg for a "crime" which we in our senior moment now escapes us, there was I whose butterfly-designed eyeglasses (it was the 'in-thing' that time, mind you, rivaled only by Mrs. Ranses' bolder ones) flew a mile when the dear sister gave my head a big whack with two hardbound books (Two books? Hardbound? Oouch!) and there was us, throwing "sandiya" at her as she wrote furiously on the blackboard. Sr. Irmburg who for some reason, we likened to Ichabod Crane, turned beet red whenever she was in a high emotional state, whether it was: a) anger b) happiness c) shyness or d) embarrassment, although I must say it was a) that mostly caused her to turn crimson. How I wish now that we could have given her more of b) but I do remember when I caused her d), that was the time when I, along with my classmates were in the school chapel and were asked to go to the front pew near the altar and kiss a holy relic. Came my turn and in my innocent enthusiasm to show my reverence and devotion, I gave it a big loud smack and from out of the corner of my eye I saw Sr. Irmburg slowly turned as red as the altar cloth, admonishing me in exasperated sign language - sshh - don't make it so l-o-u-d! In the succeeding years loomed the bigger than life figure of Sr. Godeharda who watched us like a hawk, ready to pounce on every perpetrator of mischief and misdemeanor. It must have been a curse from the heavens but whenever I broke the rules (thinking no one was around) Sr. Godeharda materialized out of nowhere, black veil flying in the wind, with her shaking, accusing finger directed at me or when she caught me talking loud, that dreaded finger landed in front of her lips. She both terrified and fascinated me but I am glad that I had a Sr. Godeharda in my life. If ever there was one person who instilled the DISCIPLINA MILITAR my parents wanted me to have, it was she. Sister Annunciata was the shortest nun I have ever seen, shaped like a pear with a humongous pink mole on her upper lip. She was in charge of music. No one in our class seemed to understand what music she wanted to create. I don't know about the rest, but our class never went beyond singing one line before we found Sr. Annunciata beating her baton furiously at the table and jumping up and down in exasperation and despair (and did I notice her mole becoming even more florid?) at our moronic knowledge of pianissimo, adagio or staccato. She was especially aggravated whenever the second voice in the chorus started singing off key or SOMEONE was not singing with the beat. She would make us repeat to pinpoint the culprit and invariably her stick would be pointed at - aha! - me or Mary Ann Pineda. Unable to accomplish her musical aim, Sr. Annunciata would unceremoniously dismiss the shamed and befuddled class of frustrated Joan Sutherlands only to come back and suffer the same exercise. The sound of heavy, measured steps preceded the arrival of Sr. Pudentiana as we waited for our religion class to begin. To our 14 or 15 year old eyes, sister was as old as Methusalah. She was stooped with age and wrinkles lined her sagging cheeks which fell halfway down her neck. But she was reputed to be a duchess. This knowledge plus our traditional respect for the elderly hushed us a bit. Besides, we were now past our Sophomore/Sr. Irmburg wild year and we were maturing a bit although not yet completely tamed. I could picture now Sr. Pudentiana, with her eyes rolled up to the heavens, her imploring arms outstretched in the same direction, quoting the biblical, "Give and it shall be given." And then with dramatic gestures proceeded with the quote: "Full measure... shaken together....and rrr-u-n-n-I-n-g over!" This was actually her pitch for a fund drive to collect goods for the poor. For the boxes of used clothes I donated (thank you, Ma!) she gave me a stampita which bore the dedication, "Thank you dear Bonita for your generosity. May God bless you always" and underneath she signed her name in bold Benedictine strokes. I kept that stampita for a long, long time. Just when we were in the throes of leaving St. Agnes, along came the fragile, delicate as a doll Sister Soledad. Sister Soly as she is fondly remembered was the Filipina nun who taught us grace and how to be a lady, a difficult

transition indeed in the midst of that military style training from the Germans. Where Sr. Christophera called us "child" now we were addressed by Sr. Soledad as "my dear young lady". Captivated by her tender ways as opposed to the no-nonsense German approach I developed a childish crush on her. For me, she became the epitome of graciousness and proper behavior, something which us girls lacked or had to work hard for yet. Yes, in those days we had our own crushes, you either showed your admiration openly or kept it a secret. I opted for the latter and so it can be revealed now that once upon a time not so long ago and not so far away...

Complementing the nuns was a group of young teachers some of them fresh from college for which we became their target practice on their road to their chosen field of teaching. It must have been hell for these sweet young things to meet our wild bunch but we developed a kind of mutual respect especially for the new college graduates, our youthful ages uniting us somewhat. Foremost of these were Miss Sylvia Diaz who produced a Pulitzer prize winning daughter and Miss Sarte who is now a nun. But then one cannot easily forget the curly-haired Miss Rabadam, mainly because out of mischief, we used to say her name in jungle-like rhythmic repetitions (Miss Rabadam, dan-dan-dan-dan, Miss Rabadam, dan-dan-dan-dan) and dusky Miss Canave who taught us the intricacies of the Tagalog language, like the "pakupya". And who is this woman of a certain age sashaying in her figure-hugging blue skirt, her stiletto heels making clicking sounds on the concrete floor, an expression of 'the cat who swallowed a canary' written on her face and topped by the glam look of the day : butterfly spectacles. It's the inimitable Mrs. Rances. The parade of personalities that entered our young lives left an indelible pentel pen mark on our consciousness: from wig-haired Manang Celing whose hairpiece evoked a bygone era and who attended to our needs for stampitas and rosaries from an "estante" in a corner of St. Agnes, to the ever-patient Mr. Bordeos who taught the girls how to kill the ball and readied them for the final kill : the BACS Meet.

A typical Agnesian day opened with a flag ceremony and after we have said our allegiance to flag and country we were made to MARCH into our classrooms to the tune of "The Bridge On the River Kwai" played with just the right lilt by Mila Alvarez on the piano. At the background on vigilant watch was Sr. Godeharda, woe to you if you dared talk on the way to the classrooms! A religion class started the ball rolling and as a kind of warm-up, we sang a religious song, like the song to St. Joseph, "Dear Guardian of Mary, dear Guide of her Child, Life's Ways are full weary, the dessert is wide, bleak sands are around us, no ho-oo-me can we see, Sweet Spouse of Our Lady we lean upon Thee...Sweet Spouse of Our Lady we lean upon thee!". And you know what, this song never left my memory and whenever I see a statue of St. Joseph I sang quietly this song to him. When I was living in London, I used to visit the Lady of Victories Church at Kensington and there was this beautiful statue of St. Joseph where I began to sing this religion class song. St. Joseph must have been pleased because in the 25 years that I was abroad he gave me his care and protection.

The daily marches to our classrooms and the drills at P.E. Class with Chito Calleja, our commander, barking orders ("to the rear, MARCH!") honed our skills in precision and timing and with Arlene Gojo, I must add, making sure there was no wayward out of step or a stick will flash out of nowhere to discipline the offending foot, made us the envy of Legaspi parades. We may be wild, sometimes uncontrollable, the despair of nuns, but when it came to marching, we delivered. We beat the boys at Liceo and all the other schools, parade after parade (Legaspi was so enamoured with parades then) always romping away with the first prize. But nowhere was the competitive spirit more pronounced than during the BACS (Bicol Association of Catholic Schools) Meet. The remembrance of Agnesian days is not complete without the BACS Meet. There was no competitive event in life that was more exciting, thrilling and all-consuming than this one. The desire to be the best fired our spirits and nothing united us more in our youthful sisterhood than the BACS Meet. Enemigo mortal was Santa Isabel of Naga but there were other schools too whom we competed against in all fields, from table tennis to volleyball,

singing to dancing, short story writing to spelling. The competition's greatest attraction however was the athletics, nothing fired the blood more. How many times Alexis Munoz ran to the chapel while the nail-biting see-saw ping-pong battle between St. Agnes and Sta. Isabel was played and gave all the promises to the Lord if only to make Mila Alvarez win (God, make her win and I promise...she lost count!). "Kill the ball, kill the ball pretty volleybelles, volleybelles, volleybelles, kill the ball, kill the ball pretty volleybelles, VOLLEYBELLES OF SAA!! That was our battle cry, a sing-song adapted from a hit tune and sang with fire and fury by our cheering squad who screamed their lungs out egging our team to win and a silent prayer when we were on a losing streak (a tremulous, tear-filled appeal to God: please Lord don't make us lose to Sta. Isabel give our girls one more chance and I promise...). Every year a battleground was set, whether it was Legaspi, Naga or Sorsogon. Whenever it was outside Legaspi, we took our "balutans" with us which included pillows, blankets, towels, etc., only the barest of necessities. We were the equivalent of the modern day groupies. We were willing to suffer all the discomforts of life if only to give support to our team and see them win. In one hall or a dormitory we were packed like sardines, sleeping on the floor and we had only one bathroom! Whenever we talked about it now, we are wondering, how did we survive all that? But you know, we had a great time. We made impromptu shows like I found myself wrapping my body in heart-printed curtains hanging in one of those halls, singing "My Funny Valentine, Sweet Comic Valentine..." as I rolled around, peek a booed and tossed the curtains a la Broadway show. I can picture now Chita Vallejo embracing her traveling pillow giggling at such chutzpah.

No recollection of our days in St. Agnes would be complete without relating our trips to Leni Aycardo's tiendahan where we ate the most heavenly, unforgettable halu-halo. All the halu-halo's in the world could not compare with that of Leni's. At the end of the day, after cracking our brains on the phytagorean theory, we needed a break, much like after a hard day's work at the office, you repair to a pub or a bar, to discuss the affairs of the day. Leni's tiendahan became our very own bar where we drowned our perceived hurts and sorrows or celebrated our hard-earned little victories, like getting 98% mark in our religion test. As we swirled the colorful combination of mongo, mais, gulaman, ube, kaong against the crushed ice all the disappointments of our secluded world disappeared. More so when we let that delicious mélange of flavours and textures linger in our tongue. Magnifico! The halu-halo was a complement to our daily diet of roasted peanuts, coke and our "baon" of pan de lemon with a boiled egg inside. But the most popular item in the school canteen was the 'white rabbit' candy which sold like the proverbial hotcakes. One fine day, the white rabbits disappeared from the "garapon" of the canteen. The authorities suspected they were laced with drugs which explained the insatiable appetite of the Agnesians for the wretched sweets!

It may be gone now, but during our time in the late 50's and early 60's, we had our very own "field of dreams". It was a big tract of land across the back of the school building planted with rice and with cogon grass, flowers and trees growing in its fringes. A meandering brook separated it from the land where St Agnes stood and a fragile, treacherous-looking bamboo bridge connected it. We love what was across but an injunction from the nuns not to cross that small bridge and go beyond (for some perverse reason) made it even more attractive. We dared cross that bridge but there was really nothing special once we were there except perhaps ran after a butterfly or two or for Neria Nidea to pluck her favorite sweet-scented white camia flower. But the thrill, the excitement of just being able to go across and feel like conquistadores setting claim to our own "field of dreams" was more than our hearts can bear. Perhaps it was also symbolical of our growing independence from the nuns, it was not so much to cross them but as to find out for ourselves as growing girls, that yes, we could do it on our own and discover in our own terms what lay beyond.

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To you Bonet - a poem from me...

"The Flower with Fire"

She is the flower of the day
That blooms from morning
till the tender night ...

In a distance you capture the youth
in her charms

Near, you behold she's a woman-child
all in one ...

Throw off your shoes, roll on the grass
Kiss the ground and hug her hair

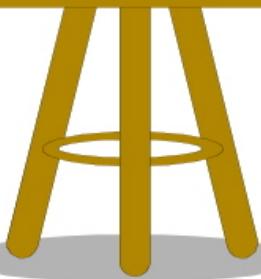
Talk, and croon and gaze upon the eyes
that tell the Bonet, the milk
and the fire ...

2-5-68

St. Agnes' Academy

High School Student

Essay Writing Contest



The Right Buddy

Nicole Victoria Tan

II – St. Augustine
SAA, Legazpi City

Friends! What comes into your mind when you hear the word “friend”? Do friends exist just to help you accomplish your evil plans, or to serve as your slaves for life?

Absolutely not! Friends are more than that. Friends are not machines who are to be manipulated or abused. They are special people who make life worth living. Friends are angels sent by God to us in order to give us a sense of belonging and satisfaction. These are the people with whom we share our joys and grievances, our ups and downs. They are our temporary brothers and sisters.

Most people treasure their friends but unfortunately, not all people do. Some people even get pushed around, abused and even put into extreme dangers by their friends.

Why do these injustices happen to some people? Do they blame God for creating such “so-called “angles” or “companions”? It could be their own carelessness that brought them to their own fates. No matter how great having a friend around in your life may sound, you should always keep in mind that “all that glitters is not gold”. What does this mean? It means that you may be drawn to something since it somehow attracts you because of its appearance, but what you don’t know is that it may be hiding some undesirable qualities that will soon show after it has disappointed or brought you down.

This also applies to friends. We must make it a point to test a person we just met in order to find out if he/she is really true. Friends can be deceiving. Some people only befriend you because they want to benefit from whatever good thing you have, and once they get what they want they abandon you or even put you to dangers you never thought you’d get into.

A true friend is one who asks how you are and wait to hear the answer. They never hesitate to shove the truth right at your face no matter how much it hurts. Never hate your friends for this since they only want what’s best for you.

Many young people are led astray by their friends while there are those who reach success due to the good influences of the proper friends they have.

With the proper decision, guidance and a steadfast mind, you can avoid the bad types of people and wisely detect the good ones with whom you’d want to share your life with.

Everybody needs at least one good friend in one’s life. It doesn’t matter if you’ve got only two or three friends, for as long as they are true, you are blessed. There are those people who have such a good number of pals, yet most of them are fakes.

Friends are gifts not to be taken for granted. They are like pearls who give beauty and simplicity to life.

What’s a rich man with no friends, compared to a poor man with many?

So, choose and treasure the right buddies right now for tomorrow might be too late.

Friends... who are they anyway?

Jessica Paola Manalo

II – St. John Bosco
SAA, Legazpi City

According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in order for an individual to reach its paramount goal of self actualization, he must attain other sublevel of needs. This involves the physiological needs comprising shelter, food, clothing, etcetera as well as security needs or the feeling of being protected and safeguarded. Another more important goal for an individual to be totally fulfilled is through his realization that in most ways, he must BELONG. Belongingness, is a very complicated word, very indefinable unless it is felt. So, how do people know that they belong?

Well they need friends.

Everybody needs friends. So what are friends anyway? Is it something you can buy over the counter? Or, is it something that requires a deep thorough search? For many people, friends are persons whom they cannot live without. A friend comes in different names: buddy, pal, companion, bro, sis, anything we can call it but generally, they do the same function in our lives, that is to add spice in our life, and join us in every remarkable moment in our lives. A friend is someone who is just like our own selves, someone we can easily get along with and who has likes and dislikes just like ours. They are called friends since they are the ones we are totally compatible with. Just like the old saying goes, "Birds of the same feather, flock together". People of the same attitude, flock together, and eventually lead to a mutual relationship known as Friendship.

Friendship evolves in various ways in individuals. It can start between two persons and continue to spread to a massive number. It even transforms from the lowest level of sharing laughter, jokes, memorable experiences to the highest level of consoling at the midst of crisis and deep trials. Friendship closes the gap of two different worlds and opens the bridge for a unified well-being. Friendship, through friends is an instrument that promotes fellowship and camaraderie, and most specially, serves as a source of strength for individuals to continue coping with endeavors and struggles for they believe that they are never alone and someone's always there-ready to hold their hand, laugh with them, cherish with them their funny moments, rescue them when they fall, and help them to stand up and start over. With all these significances, who will ever think that they can survive without friends?

Unfortunately, others seems to think so. They believe that they can live alone, and they don't need anyone in order to get a life! What remains unseen for these people is the fact that, life is no life at all without anyone to get along! No man is an island and one must always put in mind that the purpose of living is to coexist and to belong to a group, which can ultimately lead them to a more fulfilled and actualized life. Consequently, it would result to a progressive and fruitful society to live in.

Friendship is not a mere relationship, it is a commitment, a commitment that must be taken cared of in order to last. As a quote says, "Friends are diamonds! They must be polished and kept properly in order to preserve their brightness and luster! More than diamonds, friends can make you wealthy. It's something very expensive that even money cannot buy!"

WHEN GOD SMILED

Joana Marie E. Verdeflor

IV – St. Ambrose
SAA Legazpi City

The gift of friendship is one of the greatest things that life has to offer. And for 16 years now, I am still in a continuous struggle of figuring out what I can offer it.

I was in my freshmen year when I was chosen as one of the cheerleaders of the team. Every afternoon, all the cheerers gathered at the center of the field to practice. As each figure got harder, one of the girls seemed to be having a hard time keeping up. Tough I was not a good dancer myself, I slowly approached her and offered my help. With a gentle reassuring smile, the shy little girl who also happened to be a freshmen student started to relax. We attacked each step together until she was able to do it perfectly. We never said anything after that. Except that the day ended with a gentle tap from me and a shy smile from her.

The next four years of learning and living created tough senior years for all of us. These were periods of searching for answers to questions that seemed to be the only fuels of every class discussion. I was so busy asking life's what, when, where, who, that I failed to ask its fundamental why.

Life was too giving though. One of the nights at Betania's Retreat House changed everything completely. And here goes the story.

We were all asked to open our retreat letters in one of the sessions. As I was checking out letter after letter, one blue envelope carrying an unfamiliar scribble caught my eyes. It took me hardly less than a minute to finally get to the bottom part that clearly said: "I would always remember that day when you taught me the steps, thank you." And I knew right then that God indeed answers even before we ask.

I can never be able to tell you if it was a Monday or Wednesday, or a Friday perhaps. Nor can I be able to exactly show you the figure we were practicing that day. All I can be certain of is that it was during that peaceful afternoon when I finally saw God's smile. And it was beautiful.

Friends can be the sun's bright rays or the stars' twinkle at night, it can be the person sitting next to you right now, or even with the pair of eyes staring back at you in the mirror! God's smile can be anywhere as long as you search for it.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge a very special person for sharing with me the world's most generous smile. For all that has become of me that special day, all I can say is Catherine Millena, Thank you. You never know how much you touched me.

Superficiality to Reality

Karleen Mae Desolo

II – St. Dominic
SAA, Legazpi City

There was once a little boy who had a toy which was a rabbit. This rabbit was his friend since he was born. The little boy loved his rabbit so much that he wanted it to be with him whenever he goes. From lunch to supper until he sleeps. That love made the rabbit real. From being an ordinary velveteen one to being such a cheerful and lovely toy, who can understand and feel the exact feelings of an ordinary boy! Because of the love that the little boy gave to him, the rabbit, in exchange, also gave an overflowing love to his master/bestfriend. But one day, the little boy got sick. He needed rest. So, they can't play together now. This happened almost everyday since the little boy had a very serious disease. Then, the day which the rabbit was so afraid of came. The boy's parents decided to throw the old toys which were kept in a cabinet, including the toy rabbit! Because they thought that the cause of the boy's illness was contamination. So, they decided to clean the area and get rid of those old ones. But the little boy pleaded. "Except my toy!" he said. The toy rabbit was almost in tears. His bestfriend wanted him to stay! But they didn't have a choice. So, one day the boy had to say goodbye to his friend, his ever-loyal and loving friend. They went to a place near the stream where the other rabbits (animals) play. The little boy's tears fell on the velveteen toy rabbit. The toy rabbit felt the drop of tears from the little boy's eyes, as he said goodbye to his friend, his bestfriend. That was the end of the friendship between the rabbit, being a toy, and the boy as a human. But their friendship will last in their hearts. Because they left a mark on each other's memory FRIENDSHIP. Which made them real, specially the rabbit..."

The story taught us a lesson that everything can be our friend. But not everyone and everything can be friend to us. They can also be our enemy. But being a friend is already something to someone who hasn't experienced being loved truly. The rabbit had a friend and loved him, despite the fact that he is only a toy. A small, ragged, old toy. It is already something that the both of them can keep. Even though they are apart from each other, and they are of different kind. But it doesn't really matter. Friendship is not about the distance, the status of life where you belong nor the place or clan where you came. As long as the bonds are tightly bonded between you, and the love and care are felt, real friendship can be there. Friendship, which can make one person belong to a crowd, or can appreciate his talents, ideals, goals, achievements and so on. And can make him real. A real person, a real friend, a real son/daughter, a real sibling or just a real ordinary student/classmate. Which can make other people laugh. Can welcome new friends, and can love everyone from the heart. As they say, everything in this world can be taught and can be learned; except love. Love is felt, it can't be taught and can't be learned. Just like friendship. It is something that is built. Something that everyone can rely on or hold on to. It is something that is kept and treasured. One can have hundreds of friends, but I am sure that not all of them are real and treasured.

I have a lot of friends, but only very few are real. I have five good friends, but only two of them are the best. See? I think that's the reality. That some people make friends with you just for the sake of having many friends or just to have someone who can help you, which I think is unfair. But my two best Friends and some other are really good because they are true. They know exactly what I feel and what I want. They tell good and bad criticisms, which made me improve and let me know of my strengths and weaknesses. They are exactly what I need. Someone who will help me rise when I am down and fall with me when I stumble. Not all people are like that. And I know that it will not stay that way forever. But I hope, and I wish that I could have them for the rest of my life. Because it's hard to find good friends. REAL FRIENDS. Who can love us and trust us. It is a so hard to build friendship. We don't know exactly the persons who will be our friends. We will talk and laugh together first, and then hangout. But it is not the real friendship. We have to dig deeper until we find the real pearl and treasure. FRIENDS. The real ones. And then start to build a home for them in your hearts. Then TREASURE!

A bestseller BOOK...

Louisse Odeth O. Leosala

II – St. Francis
St. Agnes Academy

*“A single candle can illuminate an entire room but a true friend
can light up an entire life”*

Life will never be complete without sugar and spice to sweeten it up. It won't be worth-living without sharing it with other people or touching other's lives. Friends will and will always be a part of human life and nature. But do you agree that true friendship is scarce nowadays? People are bounded by distance, by time and priorities. How ridiculous it is to imagine how we spend most of our time with our buddies and pals yet in the long run, how easy it is for us to find our good-byes. It is because we do not choose it for it chooses and finds us. Let it just come along our way to discover more lives.

Distance and time are not hindrances to a real friendship. May it be mountains to climb or wide oceans to sail, all is possible if there is trust to one another. Priorities in life must not break friendship apart for its fruits will be worthless if not shared with others.

Isn't it happy to have someone to share with all our deepest secrets? One who will always have to care for us and will never leave us. Buddies who are eager to listen to our heartbreaks and ready to lend a helping hand or a shoulder to cry on. Isn't it great to always end a day with warm embrace and sweet and tender kisses and hugs from friends to make us feel appreciated and to show they are there for us? But shortcomings are always a part of it. We must never be taken aback with problems because these are just tests to the relationships. The important thing is we learn to grow with the mistakes and cherish the memorable moments we had with them, moments, which are truly priceless and will be treasured throughout life.

I was in my freshmen years when I decided to run for a major position in the student council of our school. Promises of support from all of my friends and buddies gave me the strong determination to go for it and give it a try though I knew I would end up having a close-fight with a potent opponent from another party. With words of encouragement and inspiration from my pals, burdens seemed lighter and it made me believe more in myself. Came election day and casting of votes, I leaped for election as I peeped through five freshmen classes and saw my name highlighted for gaining the most number of votes for the said position in each of those classes I went down corridors to take a peek on the class where I have the most number of acquaintances but my world suddenly stopped turning when I learned I only got two votes from the group and the more shocking was knowing that those votes did not come from any of my trusted friends but from fellow students who just believed in my worth as a leader. Does friendship have to end up that way? Whatever their reasons were for doing so, I did not want to be judgmental. I did not want to walk away so I endured the pain, which is the greatest test of friendship.

It is hard to cast a smile to a friend when the pain is still there but smile heals the wound. Without any confrontation, we are back to the real world of friendship for I realized that being true is not finding faults in them, but being patient of their shortcomings. I did not win the position but I still won the hearts of my friends.

Friendship is a book. Every chapter has its own story waiting to be unfolded. It is not perfect yet it can struggle for perfection to make it the bestseller.

FRIENDSHIP

Rosemarie Joy B. Buban

II – St. John Bosco

SAA, Legazpi City

Friendship is a wonderful gift that no one can buy. It is made up of love that roots in our hearts to make fruits of memory that will last for a lifetime.

Friends? I have so many of them. It is with our friends that we can find ourselves happy and comforted. Our friends are the ones who are ready to lend a helping hand without hesitations. They would treat you kindly behind your back even if you have done something wrong to your friend. And even if you are far apart; letter, phone calls, e-mails and text messages can keep them intact. Friends are the ones who overlook our failures and tolerate our successes. We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in a vessel, drop by drop, it fills the heart and it runs over. Friends forgive our mistakes and help us forget them. They believe in our dreams and help us attain them. Through our friend God finds a way in reaching out to us. We are thankful that our trusted friends were there during the times we had problems. Together we list our goals and dreams we want to accomplish, and even vulnerability. They also require attention and simple acts of kindness. When one of our friends is down and out, we should go out of our way to make him/her better by calling, visiting or by writing encouraging notes. We share dreams with others and make them true. We sing songs together even if we are out of tune. Through our tears and laughters, we could have the strongest bonding with our friends. We keep our friend's secrets and take care of their trust for us.

It is no easy thing to find a friend along the way, I mean the friend whose smile extends a single day... Who has a word of cheerful praise for everything you do and when misfortune turns the tide, is still friend to you. The kind of friend whose attitude is never dark or cold, but who is always loyal and has a heart of gold.

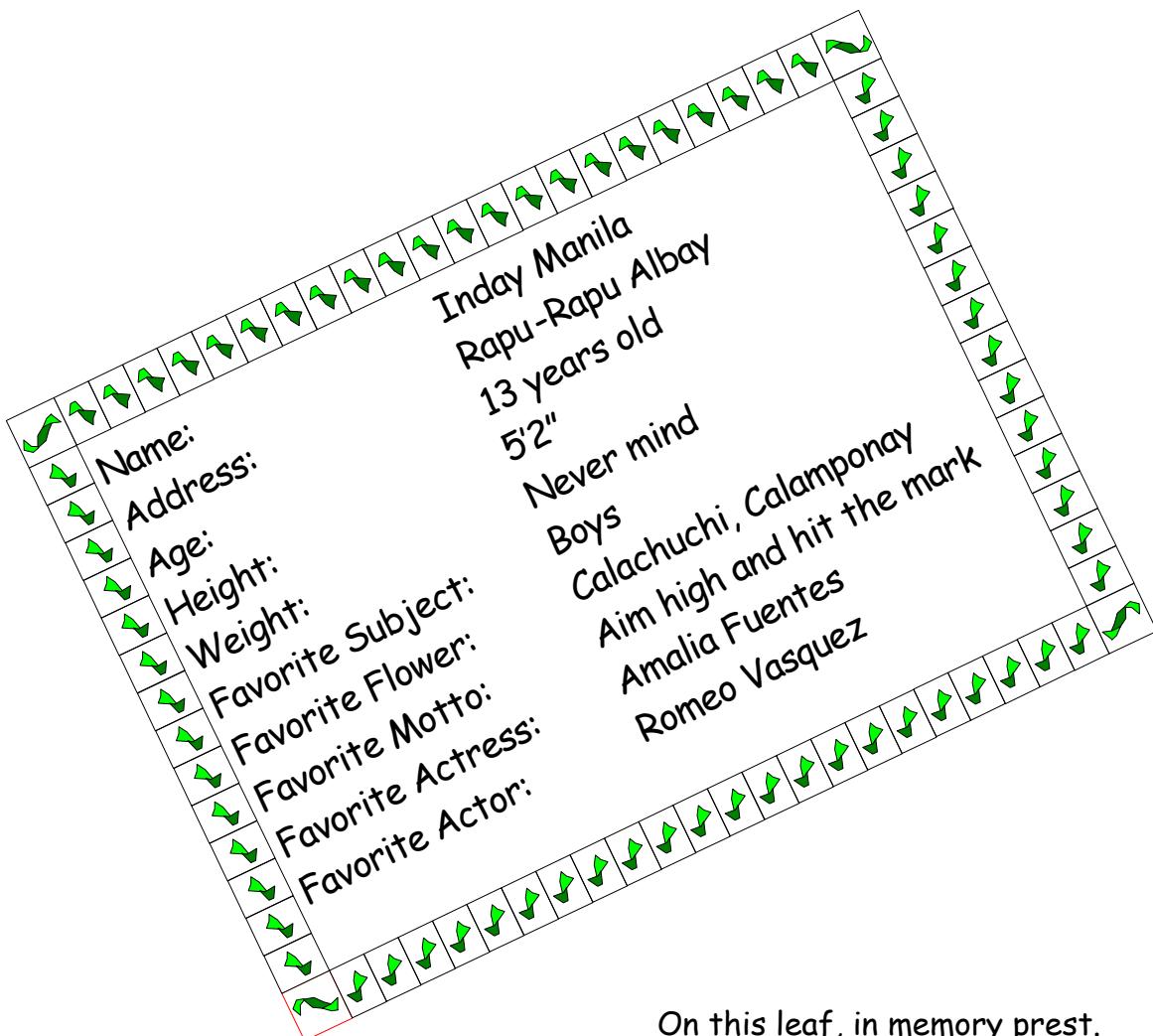
One saying says: "LET NOT OUR FRIENDSHIP BE COMPARED TO THAT OF A FLOWER THAT BLOOMS ONLY IN SUMMER. LET IT BE A RIVER THAT FLOWS FOREVER."

My Autograph's open! Come and see! What! Won't you waste a line on me!
Write but a thought, a word or two.
That memory may revert to you.

Submitted by Susan Rutiaga

If writing in Autographs remembrance
assures with the greatest of pleasure.
I'll write in yours.

Submitted by Susan Rutiaga



Submitted by Susan Rutiaga

"A BLAST FROM OUR PAST"

.....a peek at the scribbles of unseasoned writers and budding artists.

Do you still recall the cliches making the rounds from one slum book to the other? As the world twirled, as the days, months and years turned into decades, as the sun rose and disappeared into the horizon, as memories faded with the moon, precious and few of them remained, and precious and few Agnesians remember.

Susan Arboleda Rutiaga remembers and sent us her contribution. So, here goes.

Love was begun by Adam and Eve
Anthony and Cleopatra practiced it
Romeo and Juliet died for it
So, Susan dear BEWARE of it.

Boys are many
Girls are plenty
But don't forget to marry at twenty
And have a healthy child
To join him in Philippine Army.

If a boy sits besides you and say, "I love you!!!!"
Don't answer yes or no but say, "Bata pa tayo."

I wish to wish
The wish i wish
You wish to wish
The wish you wish.

Let your life be like arithmetic, joys added, sorrows subtracted, friends multiplied, love undivided.

He who is true to one friend thus proves himself worthy of many.

May your joys be as deep as the ocean
and your sorrows be as light as its foam.

I write this simple lines for thee.
When'er you see them think of me.

I write in the middle of your autograph so that
you will remember me in the middle of your heart.

In your golden book of memory, let me be, but a part.
In the golden chain of friendship, regard me as a link.

May the hinges of our Friendship never rust.

Forget me not.....

Bonita Arevalo Medrano wrote...."but lest these precious Words of Wisdom are scattered into the winds, let me repeat them here so they don't get buried along with Little Lucy(fer) at the bottom of the sea and wait for the next tsunami."

Hitch your wagon to a star!

Aim high and hit the mark.

Forget me not
Forget me never
Forget the jeepney
But not the driver!

I love you todo-todo
Without poro-pondo.

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Sugar is sweet my love
But not as sweet as you.

If you are a water lily
Floating in the Cagayan Valley
Just say one Hail Mary
And you will remember me.

Friends are like water melons
Do you know why?
Before you can find one
A million you must try.

Though our dreams are shattered
And the petals scattered
But my love will never die!

From **Lolita Ramos Mercado**

My heart never gets tired remembering special people like you. Take care! Good Morning!

Totie Balce

forget me not
forget me never
forget the letter
but not the writer

From Nenette Zapanta Lee's memory bank

Remember M. Remember E.
Put them together,
Remember ME.

ITALY: I truly love you.

SWAK: Sealed with a kiss.

Vicky Arboleda Schroeder
To my classmates,

When joy and gladness fill the heart
When Care and Sorrow both depart
When all around is fun and glee
My classmates dear, remember me.

Vicky Arboleda (HS'60)

Dear Classmates,

Not like the rose let our friendship whither
But like majestic Mayon live forever.

Vicky Arboleda (HS'60)

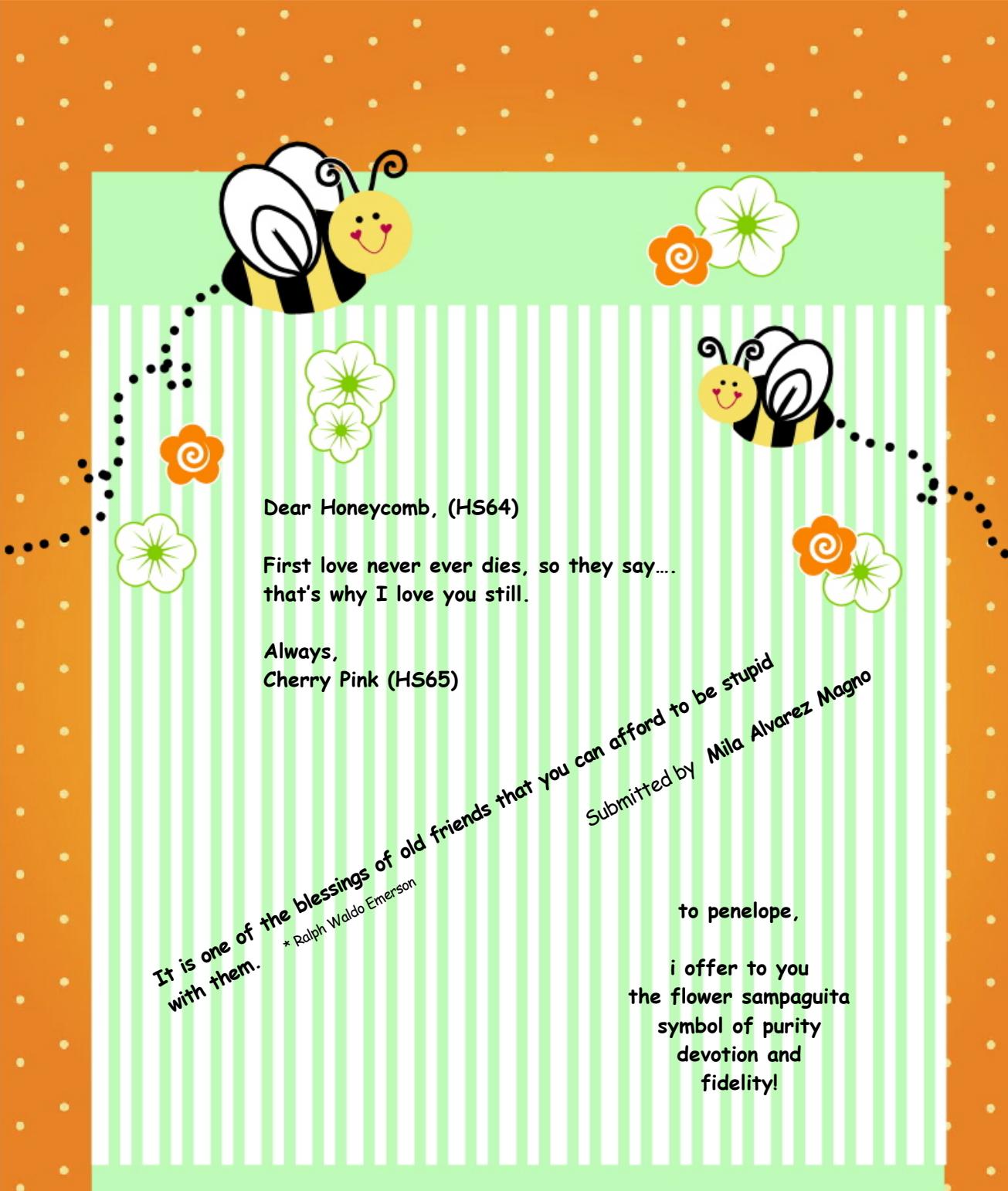
This section of the book is ended with one from **Gloria Jaucian**:

WHEN ON THIS PAGE YOU CHANCE TO LOOK
THINK OF ME AND CLOSE THE BOOK!

With a second motion from **Nenette**

SWSSTKTDTC: SEAL WITH SUFFICIENT SALIVA TO KEEP THIS DARN THING CLOSED!!!!





Dear Honeycomb, (HS64)

First love never ever dies, so they say....
that's why I love you still.

Always,
Cherry Pink (HS65)

*It is one of the blessings of old friends that you can afford to be stupid
with them.* * Ralph Waldo Emerson

Submitted by Mila Alvarez Magno

to penelope,

i offer to you
the flower sampaguita
symbol of purity
devotion and
fidelity!



Make friends with the angels, who though invisible are always with you.... Often invoke them, constantly praise them, and make good use of their help and assistance in all your temporal and spiritual affairs.

St. Francis De Sales

Submitted by Mila Alvarez Magno

Angels fly because they take themselves lightly.

G.K. Chesterton

Submitted by Alexis Munoz Dasig

Sylvia Diaz Meyer

Do you know of anyone whose goodness immensely enhanced your life? Well, I once had a friend who had a tremendous influence on me. Her name was Vickie and she lived next door with her family. Her husband Jim was a United States army sergeant. Vickie and Jim had two children; David, who was five, and three-year-old Willie.

It was 1971 and the place was Okinawa, Japan. My husband Ray was a teacher with the U.S. Department of Defense school system at Kubasaki High School. Our oldest son Stuart was in kindergarten; we also had Vince, Cheryl, and our youngest son, Terry, who was only a year old.

Jim and Ray did not have much in common, but their children were always together, building and rebuilding their make-believe fort, chasing toads, or playing ball. Vickie and I watched the kids, exchanged recipes, shared news from home, made friends with new American families moving into the neighborhood, etc. Vickie was more like a sister to me than just a neighbor.

Vickie knew many things and could almost do anything. When I marveled at her skills, I was told about the time she spent in her aunt's farm. Vickie wanted to teach me whatever she knew, whether it was cross-stitching or decorating a cake. I liked learning from her, although both of us failed miserably when she tried to teach me how to drive. The car was in the repair shop in a week.

In 1974 Ray finished his Masters in Guidance and Counseling and requested for a transfer. We moved from Okinawa to Germany where he taught psychology and was the golf coach at the Mannheim American high school. A year after our move, Jim and Vickie were transferred to Texas. Vickie and I wrote each other at least once a year especially during the Christmas holidays.

In 1982 my family moved to Duluth, Minnesota. Not long after that, Vickie drove with the children from a military base in Kentucky to visit us. We shared stories deep into the night. This first visit was followed by a second one; those reunions were truly marvelous.

After twenty years in military service, Jim decided to retire, and the family bought a house in Oregon. Vickie and I continued our communication, which by then was mostly about the children who were pursuing college careers. It was probably five years after their move to Oregon that I heard from Vickie about a cancer diagnosis.

The cancer attacked her bone marrow. The doctors decided on a bone marrow transplant, which was a huge success. I was not worried at all. In fact, I followed the progress of her healing. You see, Vickie was a slender woman, but she had a lot of strength, both physical and spiritual. I had no doubt she would overcome the disease.

The cancer, however, came back after two years. Vickie was bedridden for a few months, and when the end came, it came fast. My daughter Cheryl was able to make it to her bedside, but I did not make it to Oregon on time. I was still very much in denial at that time and did not want to accept that Vickie would actually succumb to cancer.

During the wake, I could not really see Vickie's face because Jim and the family had it covered with a veil. I was utterly devastated and broke down. The funeral was unbearable, and the trip back to Duluth was one of grief and thoughts. I would like to share with you now those thoughts.

Vickie, My Friend

O God, whose love surrounds us all;
You hug us daily with snow, spring rain,
And summer sun, and leaves that fall.
You put us in a garden with many flowers fair,
And thorns that speak of sorrows we must bear.

In this garden I met a rose, lovelier than many in the
bush;
More kind, more caring than anyone would suppose.
She saw me gaze at soft clouds sailing by,
And was with me through storms and thunder might.
We winked at rainbows in their festive show of colors bright.

Alas, the sun goes down too soon for some.
I will weep in loss of friend for years to come.
Yet sunset beckoned her to immortal heights
With joys unsurpassed by earthly delights.

Thank you, my Lord, for a touch of heaven
You have shown.
My love to you, my dearest Friend;
Farewell, I know you're home.

Sylvia

Alona Pelaez Dave

This is just part of the letter from my younger sister, just few days after her birthday and two months before she died...She is also my best friend....

' I couldn't love you more even with those things kasi my heart has no more space puno ng love spiced with gratitude-Ate I Love you. I just feel it in my bones & spleen & pancreas even with diabetes that you love us. May the lord give you strength and abundant blessings!!! Love You!!! Be Happy!'

Alona Pelaez Dave (Class '66)

My sister's name is Jezebel Pelaez Gacula. She wrote this letter (e-mail) on 31 August 2000 and she died on 26 October 2000 of cervical cancer. I still keep her e-mails up to now and all her letters.

In memory of the passing away of Josephine Locsin's husband and Neria Nidea's father

No man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main;
...any man's death diminishes me, because
I am involved in mankind;
and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
it tolls for thee.

--- John Donne

Submitted by Bong

For Neria Nidea Soliman and Josephine Locsin Lee, on the loss of their loved one.

No man is an island, no man stands alone
Each man's joy is joy to me
Each man's grief is my own

We need one another, so I will defend
Each man as my brother
Each man as my friend

By Alex Kramer & Joan Whitney
Excerpts from song we used to sing in glee club.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63



Tamen Pardo

IN MEMORY OF
MARILEN ESPINOSA BARRENECHEA
AND THE REST OF OUR CLASS'55 CLASSMATES WHO ARE NOW ENJOYING OUR
LADY'S AND OUR LORD'S CARESSES IN HEAVEN

Marilen Espinosa Barrenechea, a friend I'll never forget. She was our classmate from third grade to third year high school. A malicious flu grabbed her away from us. She was second to go from Class '55 just after our Junior and Senior Prom – we were juniors then. The class was really hit hard by the news of Marilen's departure. It was really our second acquaintance with death. The first time we encountered death was when we were in elementary, it was Cereli Alcazar, a very dear classmate. She was run over while crossing the street. I still remember her serene and sweet face; she lay in her bed under a mosquito net. To me she was sleeping. When you are 8 years old your mind is not ready to accept such tragedy.

Then in March 1955 we graduated. Fifty years now is what we'll celebrate, our Golden Jubilee and, how many of us have now departed? How many of us will not be there to celebrate this big event? But yes, with the eyes of faith, I am sure they will be there in the grounds of our dear SAA.

Do you recall the film "The Long Grey Line" if so, you will know what I mean. In the end of the movie all those that had died marched along The Long Grey Line and yes, we'll see Teresita Ang, Norma Avila, and Cielo Corral waving at us. We'll find Thelma Hipolito, Salud Labayo, and my very dear Aida Mabini, member of the Four Leaf Clover Gang, giving us their best smile. Zenaida Morales, Vienney Quismorio, Rosario Relao, Lorna Sabido, Alicia Sy, and Kathleen Newman, all of them for sure will be there enjoying our big event.

THEY WILL BE THERE FOR SURE ENJOYING WITH US, CLASS'55, OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE!!

MARCH 7, 2005, Jenny Messias, another member of the Four Leaf Clover Gang, decided to join The Long Grey Line. When we almost reached the goal, when in less than two months we would all see each other again in our Golden Jubilee Celebration, Our Lord Jesus had other plans for her; therefore, as Fr. Delaney always said: OFERIMUS TIBI DOMINE.

Jenny dear, you know how much I/we cared for you. Rest in Peace and enjoy God's company.

To all of you dear departed classmates a big hug with prayers. We'll never forget you; in our hearts you'll always be present. Until we meet again face to face, CHEERS!

From Tamen:

Let me share this with you my dearest pinangatugangs I think it contains wisdom, it is beautiful and true.

It was sent to me today by my cousin Pilar Bastida Centenera.

WHAT WILL MATTER

by Michael Josephson

Ready or not, someday it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no days, no hours or minutes.

All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten,
will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.

It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.

Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will all expire.

The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived.

It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.

Your gender, skin color, ethnicity will be irrelevant.

So what will matter?

How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built;
not what you got, but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success, but your significance.

What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage and sacrifice
that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence, but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew,
but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories, but the memories of those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.

It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters.

To Petunia, My Lost Dog

Last night I dreamt you were with us again. In my dream, I closed the front gate just about the time a robust rabbit darted thru the iron rails. With the sixth sense of a person in a dream, I saw the rabbit's vision of my succulent annual flowers dancing in his head. With lightning speed you pounced at the rabbit running him off my garden. Could it be that once in a while you come down from your heaven to look after my interest? It couldn't be. You are only a dog.

I love you Tuni.

Alexis Munoz Dasig, once a friend of a loyal Shih Tzu



Because...

.....Allure??? What? I am alluring?...hahaHAHA
Your luggage is overweight!
You have space for only two undergarments..
Ano iyan tingga?

Sigui na baba. Surat na.
Should we strip or should we cerlox?
Strip of course, ta mainit sa Pinas.

Joy, ano ini, House

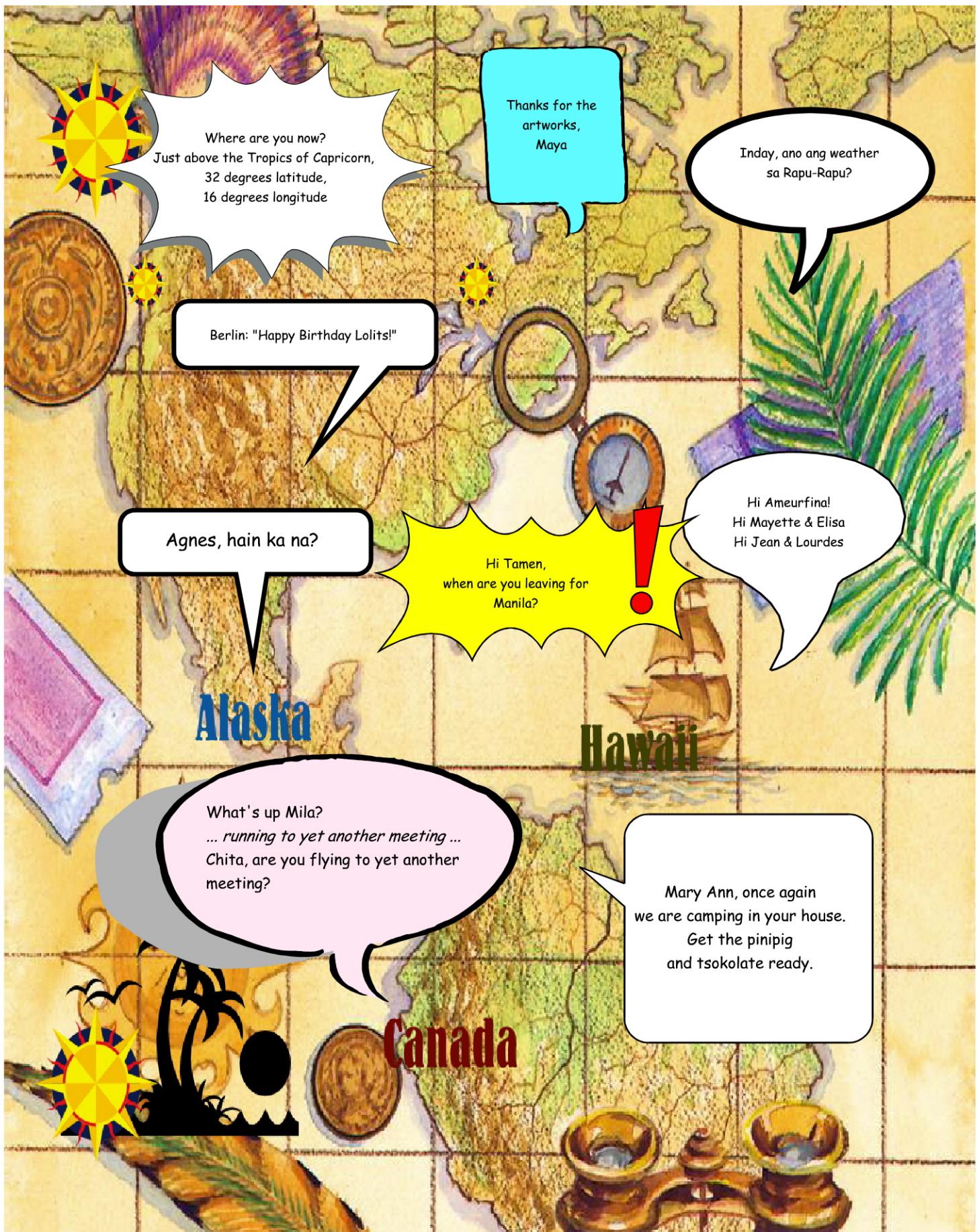
Naq uli sa Legaspi to clean house..

Beautiful?

sneeze.
these days
will pass like
90 days

PASSPORT

We
Are
Friends





Nonong, Remy's carrot cake, please!



Congratulations Fr. Rod!

Hi Susan, Vicky!
Hi Bong, Margie, Nong!

What exactly are you doing now?
I am leaving for work.
I am having a small procedure done
... just had cholecystectomy
... just had a nose job

Hello Cora & Totie!
Hi Benny!

I am drinking
wine
in front of laptop

What time is it over there?
10 p.m. Philippines
1 a.m. California
4 a.m. Toronto

Where are you now?
I'm at Greenhills Tianggi
What color blouse do you want?
Blue - yes - blue



Money, Money, Money

It can buy a House
But not a Home
It can buy a Bed
But not Sleep
It can buy a Clock
But not Time
It can buy you a Book
But not Knowledge
It can buy you Position
But not Respect
It can buy you Medicine
But not Health
It can buy you Blood
But not Life
So you see, Money isn't
everything. And it often
causes pain and suffering.

I tell you all this because I
am your Friend, and as your
Friend I want to take away
your pain and suffering.....

So send me all your money
and I will suffer for you.
A more true Friend you will
never find:-)

Submitted by Alexis

Life doesn't need to be too perfect, to be too rich, doesn't need to be too famous
As long as you have peace in your heart, that's more than enough

Submitted by Lolita



AN OLD JOKE DEDICATED SPECIALLY FOR YOU CLASS' 55

FOR THE GOLDEN GIRLS, HERE GOES:

Two elderly women were eating breakfast in a restaurant one morning. Ethel noticed something funny about Mabel's ear and she said: "Mable, did you know you've got a suppository in your left ear?"

Mabel answered: "I have? A suppository?" She pulled it out and stared at it. Then she said: "Ethel, I'm glad you saw this thing. Now I think I know where my hearing aid is!"

From Tamen

From Alexis Munoz Dasig:

Dearest Tony,

Thanks for putting up with the Friendship Book. Between housework, my real job and the Book, many nights I failed to cook you dinner.....did clean the bathrooms....heheheh.....

For Mary Jane Munoz Prieto:

Dearest Mary Jane,

Thanks for all the clothes you make for me. They are very comfortable and they always make me feel confident when i wear them...

Dearest Chita,

How nice to rediscover you in our adulthood, to know what you really are made of. I like what i found, to say the very least.

Dearest Joy,

Thanks for spending time with us, even with your busy schedule. Thanks for inviting us to your Tagaytay hideaway. For a while I felt I was living in a House Beautiful magazine. You are still the same gentle Joy I used to know, warmhearted and kind, a person i should emulate.

Dearest Cecile,

Thank goodness you don't live very far from me and can be easily reached, that is, if you are not over there, over where? traveling. I enjoy our get togehter immensely! Hoping for more of those happy times with you.

Dearest Leni,

You are still as colorful as you have always been. You have not aged a bit. Still remember the halo-halo we feasted on in your place, and the company! Never mind that I was scolded countless times for coming home late, but given the chance, i will not change anything. Those days are priceless.

FRIENDS ARE LIKE BUTTONS IN AN ELEVATOR...SOME TAKE YOU UP,
OTHERS BRING YOU DOWN. AND THE TRUE FRIENDS WE FIND ARE THOSE
WHO GET US TO THE RIGHT FLOOR.

Submitted by Nellie Armena

Friendship is a horizon
that expands whenever
we approach it.

Submitted by Bong

TO TOTIE (CLASS 64)

You stood by us through thick and thin, through sick and sin, through good times
and better times.

You stay awake until 3 am "chatting" on YM with Romie and us.
If that isn't friendship, I don't know what is.

Nenette, Jing and Cora

Dear Primoy Romie, (GS60)

After 30 years, it is so nice rediscovering you. Thank you for the
friendship and love. Thank you for the long chats and the ngarakngakan
over the phone. I am so looking forward to more.

Nenette

dear alexis, what are friends for?
but to support one another
to help each other
to warn when there is danger
to comfort when there is despair
a friend is one who takes all the arrows
to save another ---bong

ps

we your friends are ready to take some of the shots...
one for me, two for you.....hahahhah

To My Friends (just incase I trip.)
"The proper office of a friend is to side
with you when you are in the wrong. Nearly
anybody will side with you when you are in
the right." ... Mark Twain

Alexis Munoz Dasig

To HER HIGHNESS, OUR CYBER QUEEN

MILA ALVAREZ MAGNO

On behalf of all Agnesians, the pinanatugangs, all over the globe, who are taking advantage of your generosity and are enjoying immensely this instrument "the cyber space"; instrument that you so kindly decided to make accessible to all your brothers and sisters, THANK YOU YOUR HIGHNESS..

Thank you too for the www.agnesian.org web.



Thank you so much for all you've done for us your humble servants.

Yours always,

Tamen



Friendship is one of life's sweetest blessings.

Submitted by Bong

Dearest Mila,

I am sitting here, Saturday morning, February 26, 2005, taking the opportunity to write while I wait for seminar to start. The computer is not working. Someone hacked into the speaker's computer. Says he, "and to think I come from the Silicon Valley...." a nice intro into what I want to say. Because you had the bright idea of creating our websites, you made a community of us all. But for you, there will be no Friendship Book. When I saw you again in Las Vegas after over 30 years, it felt so much like high school, only better. I will always remember what you said, "This is a great time in our lives because I don't have to impress you and you don't have to impress me." Well said Mila. With you I am comfortable, you know, like the comfort one feels in an old shoe.....and there is much to be said about that.....!

Love,
Alexis

From: Nenette Zapanta Lee
Subject: Thoughts
Date: Sun, 6 Mar 2005 12:37 PM

Susan/Vicky, did you make it to LV? Did Glenn and Mary Ann go? Nuarin daa sinda mauli sa Daraga?

From: "Vicky Schroeder"

Subject: RE: Thoughts

Date: Tue, 8 Mar 2005 09:16:31-0500

Susan made it but I didn't (Vegas, I mean). The doctor told me to stay put because I've had fainting spells along with the flu. The first spell came early in the morning of the day before I was to leave for LV. I woke up starving, a good sign I thought that I was truly well - I had visions of steak and eggs (I hadn't eaten in 3 days) - thankfully I decided to share breakfast with my husband - because, shaking with hunger, and just as I opened my mouth to take that second bite - my vision blurred and found out later that I had passed out - my face plastered on a plate of steak, two eggs, and fried rice - scared the living xc%x out of my poor husband (I guess it might be hard to recover from the shock of being confronted with a beloved wife's face, early AM, with fried eggs plastered on forehead and pieces of rice and bits of meat sticking to nose and ears). He did have the presence of mind to hang on to me to keep from rolling over and cracking my head on the furniture - or, was it to keep from cracking his precious antique furniture with my head? - hmmmm. Missing LV broke my heart. I hadn't seen Susan in ages and was really looking forward to seeing her, and there were our cousins Aying, the best hostess ever, and Wina who can out-talk me any day (hard to believe) - we were all going to make up for lost time. Oh well, there'll always be a next time.

-Vicky-

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD FRIENDS

Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.
New-made friendships like new wine,
Age will mellow and refine.
Friendships that have stood the test -
Time and change - are surely best;
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow gray;
Friendship never knows decay.
For 'mid old friends, tried and true,

Submitted by Bong

Once more we our youth renew.
But old friends, alas! may die;
New friends must their place supply.
Cherish friendship in your breast -
New is good, but old is best;
Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.

---- Joseph Parry

Submitted by Bong

To My Dearest New Friends: NENETTE, JING, CORS, TOTSKY, MARICOI, ALEXIS, ROMIE G., GUIA, NER, AMY & ELSIE,

I just want you to know that I consider myself terribly, terribly lucky that (for me), you are in my life now. I enjoy talking to you, getting to know you via e-mail (thanks a million to our wonderful cyber princesa, MILA), sharing family photos and just being silly, durat (pretend only baga) and kalog again. :-)

I think there's a truth to the saying it takes more than half our lives to learn who our friends are and the other half to keep them. Can't wait to bond with you more and more this time around... better late, than never. :-)

You are all for keeps!!

Love to all, Susan Arboleda Rutiaga

Dearest GLADY & FEPOT,

What will I do without you in my life? hahaha. You are stuck with me now.... :-)

May the hinges of our Friendship never rust ... and the phone lines never bust? HAHA!!!

Love, Susan Arboleda Rutiaga

Dearest cousins.... JANE, ALITOY, VILMA, MITA, MARI ROSE, JOSIE, MARILOU & ANGEL,

Just want to let you know (I know this sounds corny).... that the fragrance of the breath of flowers will always remind me of our times together.

Love you all,
Susan Arboleda Rutiaga '67

Dearest Bong,

I am writing this because your emails always make me burst into laughter with tears. I marvel at the way you so easily spit out those words that make my eyeliner run. Write more. Your emails make my day.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

Close to my heart, you'll always be-friends forever, you and me.

Submitted by Bong

Dearest Roderick,

I am very proud that once we were classmates and prouder still because we are friends now.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

Dearest DITZ, DELIA, ANN A, ELVA, VIOLETA C., ERLINDA, GWEN, NELIA, TINA G.,
BERNIE R., MELBA M., THERESA A., VIOLETA B. & MERCY N.,

It's been years and I still can't forget everyone and our wonderful days in SAA. Hope to see you soon.

Wishing you all the best of everything.

Love,
Susan

Dearest Romie,

Thanks for the vastness of your memory bank. Your articles are always a great read. They bring back fond memories of my childhood.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

Once in a while you meet someone, and soon you both discover the two of you are truly something special to each other... you share your thoughts and feelings so relaxed, so openly, and right away you know your friendship's truly meant to be.

Author: Gary Harrington

Submitted by Jing Lomeda Valenciano '65

to my dear friend, Cora,

six years in SAA
four years in college
with our beds
side by side
almost cousins
and here we are
still going strong
the best is yet to come!

love,
jing

to class '65

i have been away for so long
we need to know each other again
and catch up for the lost times.
i can't imagine that we lost touch
with each other for forty years,
forty years.....

myrna munoz '65

to alexis, mila, joy, and mary
ann,

thank you for being my friends
and big sisters!
thank you for your love
and guidance!
each of you represent a
world in me that make my
life beautiful!

love,
jing

Kindness in words creates confidence.
Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.
Kindness in giving creates love.
Love is always bestowed as a gift --
freely, willingly, and without expectation....
We don't love to be loved; we love to love.
~ Leo Buscaglia

Submitted by Jing

F - fun-filled and
R - riotous
I - inspiring and
E - exciting
N - noteworthy and noble they too are
D - dynamic, they can be
S - such are my friends
and I thank GOD that I am blessed
with a multitude of them, my Pinangat-tugangs!
Lolits

To Margie Garcia Lee (HS Class 63)

Never shall I forget the days which I spent with you.....
Continue to be my friend, as you will always find me yours.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Lolits

To Nenette Zapanta Lee (HS Class 65)

Friendship is presenting courageously the most creative Birthday cake
i've ever seen in my life, without batting her eyebrows, and with a Fr. Rod
observing with a dead pan face!

Lolits

To Joy Alvarado (HS Class 63)

The only way to have a friend is to be one and friendship means being a friend,
not having a friend.

Rod McKuen & Ralph Waldo Emerson

Lolits

Dear Manay Tamen,

How lucky we all are Pinangat-tugangs to have such a sweet soul as you, so friendly and considerate to everyone in the web (maski dai mo pa ngani kami namidbidan sa personal). You always have a nice word with everyone and you always strive to answer everyone's e-mails. I call that Friendship. Thank you for being you.

Lolit



To HS Class '63

All I can say is that I am very grateful to the one up Above for having you as my friends - friends to die for (sarap patayin)!

To all my friends and co-Rubylarians HS Class '63 who believed in Me. I thank the Lord for making them Mine.

To the Rubylarians of year 2003

Year 2003 - a year to be thankful ...

For One who almost broke her back catering to the whims and wishes of her classmates with regards to food they wanted to savor in Legaspi; making sure that there were enough beds to accommodate everyone at her mansion; organizing the events to make the Ruby year a memorable one

I thank the Lord for his/her ...

chauffeuring & offering shelter for the homeless and especially not issuing invoices for meals and lodging - **MARY ANN PINEDA REYNOSO**

For One who satisfied our dancing appetites and willingly offered her effort and time to teach us the Mambo or was it Salsa steps in order for us to present a perfect dance number for our Ruby Year program

sincere & healthy intentions - **NERIA NIDEA SOLIMAN**

For One who patiently clicked her camera, missing the chatter of her classmates so that she could record this memorable event

immeasurable TLC & kindness - **MILA ALVAREZ MAGNO**

For One who wanted to make the best of this reunion and wanted to give joy to her classmates especially the local residents and therefore, as a token of her love brought presents along for each one of them

spicy laughter & Californian frolic - **ALEXIS MUÑOZ DASIG**

For One who sat in silence and offered his listening ear, giving a different kind of homily accompanied by singing and almost dancing; AND needless to say, uncomplainingly sleeping out on the cold marble floor of that cold evening in Puro

unwavering patience & tolerance - **FR. ROD SALAZAR, SVD**

For One who just went along the tide with his patience and uncomplaining attitude BUT proved himself to be the BEST PARTNER for the Mambo or Salsa beat

perseverance, patience & dancing prowess - **NONG GOJO**

For One who in spite of her many commitments found time to be with her Ruby Class '63 and gladly took the role as the Program Commentator and doing all this with the aplomb of a real professional

listening ear; vibrant laughter; and mother advice - **CHITA VALLEJO PIJANO**

Friends, you and me ... You brought another friend . And then there were 3 We started our group. Our circle of friends ... There is no beginning or end

Submitted by Jing Lomeda Valenciano

To my STC Barkada (Connie; Kokoy; Gilda; Girlie; Oki; Nora; KT) and hubbies (Warren; Willy; George; Rick; Bobby; Jun),

Eto naghahanda na sa forthcoming reunion natin sa May/June. I'm an overload of excitement at completo na naman tayo. I can just imagine the noise we are all going to make on our road trips. At last kasama si Jaimito (George workaholic). May DI na tayo & we can dance to our delight especially at Caroline's wedding. Kuneho (Connie), we promise to behave ourselves and act with decorum para hindi mo kami ikahiya. Hindi daw tatabi si Intsik (Warren) kay Periperick (Rick) at Sharlewa (Bobby) dahil they snore a lot and he won't be able to get a good night's sleep. Si Periperick OK lang daw na katabi niya si Sharlewa as long as Sharlewa changes his socks (recalling the train ride in France na 3 days old na yung medyas na suot niya) he he. We can skip Graceland at kaya naman pala ni Mahal (Jun) ang "blue suede shoes". He can serenade us on our road trip. Hoy Girlie, natutulog ka ba sa pancitan? Malapit ka nang mabaril sa Luneta pag di ka dumating. Kokoy, sigurado ka ba sa geography mo? Baka instead of reaching Boston, mapunta tayo ng Canada! Driving time is based on Sweetheart (Willy) taking the wheels and you know how he drives. Anong klaseng boat daw ang sasakyang natin to get to Martha's Vineyard? Tanong ito ni Oki. Ayaw niya ng banca or paddle boat at di daw siya marunong lumangoy. Hoy Manok (Nora), you need to come otherwise hindi tayo complete. Ready na ba ang mga dainty hands ninyo ni Kuneho to provide assistance sa kitchen like pagtadtad; washing plates & dishes; setting the table & clearing it out after meals. e si Kokoy (Josie)? Handa ka na ba sa cooking skills mo? Dala mo ba ang mga sawsawan namin? Remember 3 kinds: plain suka with nothing (for Oki); suka with sili (for Lolit); and suka with patis (for Manok). magdala ka pa kaya ng 2 more bottles for Girlie and Connie. magimbento ka na lang kung ano ang imimix mo sa suka. Si Lolita Yaya (that's me Lolit) na lang ang hindi pa nakakagawa ng flight arrangements niya. What can she be waiting for? Makupad si Bicol Express ano? That's because nagkamali ang calculation niya ng mga tickets. Binubukbok na kasi ang Accounting book niya na Finney & Miller - kulay tinapa na! Gilda, KT, di ba kayo naiingit sa amin? Come on and decide and book your flights! Well guys after 38 years of friendship, I should know you all. Magpapatayan ba tayo pag nagkita-kita tayo ulit? NO! We love each other so much we can't live without each other. I love you ALL and thank you for your long-lasting friendship. Who would think that with our bickering our friendship would have lasted this long?

LOLITA YAYA

To Grace Surtida Yan (my friend of 33 years)

It doesn't matter that we are not together
Because our friendship is such a strong part of my life
And as long as I know that you are happy where you are
I, too, am happy...Susan Polis Schutz

Lolit

My heart never gets tired remembering special people like you. Take care! Good Morning!
From Lolits Ramos Mercado



To all the Agnesian Moms -

the joys of parenting can be wonderful but the heartaches can be devastating- the reason is that we learn parenting from our parents and we have to unlearn what they taught us and adopt a new way of raising children with the changing times. In the 33 years of rearing a child, i've learned that we cannot pressure our children to be "successful" rather allow them the time to develop their own interests and motivations to be Achievers! We have all succeeded in doing just this - CONGRATULATIONS to the Great Agnesian Moms

From Lolits Ramos Mercado

To all Agnesians -

Love you all - cannot trade you even for \$25 billion - DEAD OR ALIVE -

From Lolits Ramos Mercado

For **Master Joaquin Reynoso** and for his baby brother **Raphael** and baby sister **Anya**.

Joaquin, this poem was written by one of my favorite authors, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and I am sending this to you.

The Children's Hour

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the wall shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away.

Love,
Tita Ting

Dearest Mini,

One of the fun things of going home is the thought of seeing you again. You are such a nurturing soul in your entertaining and yet quiet way.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

To My Dear Friends in Grade School Batch '74 and High School Batch '78,

I dedicate this article to all of you...

I am ever grateful for all the love and support you have given me during those times we were all growing up together...

Thank you, thank you!

Mwahh! Love you all!

Cathy de los Reyes- Orbigo

**FOOD FORTHOUGHT
MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR HIGH SCHOOL!**

By Bill Sanders

A couple of years ago, I witnessed courage that ran chills up and down my spine. At a high school assembly, I had spoken about picking on people and how each of us has the ability to stand up for people instead of putting them down. Afterwards, we had a time when anyone could come out of the bleachers and speak into the microphone. Students could say thank you to someone who had helped them and some people came up and did just that. A girl thanked some friends who had helped her through family troubles. A boy spoke of some who had supported him during an emotional difficult time.

Then a senior girl stood up. She stepped over to the microphone, pointed to the sophomore section and challenged her whole school. "Let's stop picking on that boy. Sure, he's different from us, but we are in this thing together. On the inside he's no different from us and needs our acceptance, love, compassion and approval. He needs a friend. Why do we continue to brutalize him and put him down? I'm challenging this entire school to lighten up on him and give him a chance!"

All the time she shared, I had my back to the section where the boy sat, and had no idea who he was. But obviously the school knew. I felt almost afraid to look at this section, thinking the boy must be red in the face, wanting to crawl under his seat and hide from the world. But as I glanced back, I saw a boy smiling from ear to ear. His whole body bounced up and down, and he raised one fist in the air. His body language said, "Thank you, thank you. Keep telling them. You saved my life today!"

PRAYER

"Lord Jesus, you became a servant for my sake to set me free from the tyranny of selfishness, fear, and conceit. Help me to be humble as you are humble and to love freely and graciously all whom you call me to serve."

Dearest Nonong,

You are always patient with us. There must be some spiritual connection among us classmates who grew up together to make us feel comfortable with you and you with us. You are like a brother and loved as one.

Love,
Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

FRIENDSHIP

There's a miracle called friendship
That dwells within the heart
And you don't know how it happens
Or when it gets its start
But the happiness it brings you
Always gives a special lift
And you realize that friendship
Is one of life's most precious gifts.

Submitted by Bong



When we think of friends, and call their faces out of the shadows, and their voices out of the echoes that faint along the corridors of memory, and do it without knowing why save that we love to do it, we content ourselves that that friendship is a Reality, and not Fancy ... that it is builded upon a rock, and not upon the sands that dissolve away with the ebbing tides and carry their monuments with them.

Mark Twain

Submitted by Alexis

Real friendship is shown in times of trouble;
prosperity is full of friends.

Euripedes

My father always used to say that when you die,
if you've got five real friends, you've had a great life.

Lee Iacocca

However rare true love may be,
it is less so than true friendship.

François Duc de La Rochefoucauld

Submitted by Mila

A real friend is one who walks in
when the rest of the world walks out.

Walter Winchell
Submitted by Jing

Friendship multiplies the good in life and divides the evil.

Baltasar Gracian (1601-56), Spanish Jesuit writer of the Golden Age
Submitted by Jing

Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love:
Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.

Much Ado About Nothing - William Shakespeare
Submitted by Bong

The holy passion of Friendship is of so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring
a nature that it will last thru a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money.

Mark Twain

Submitted by Alexis



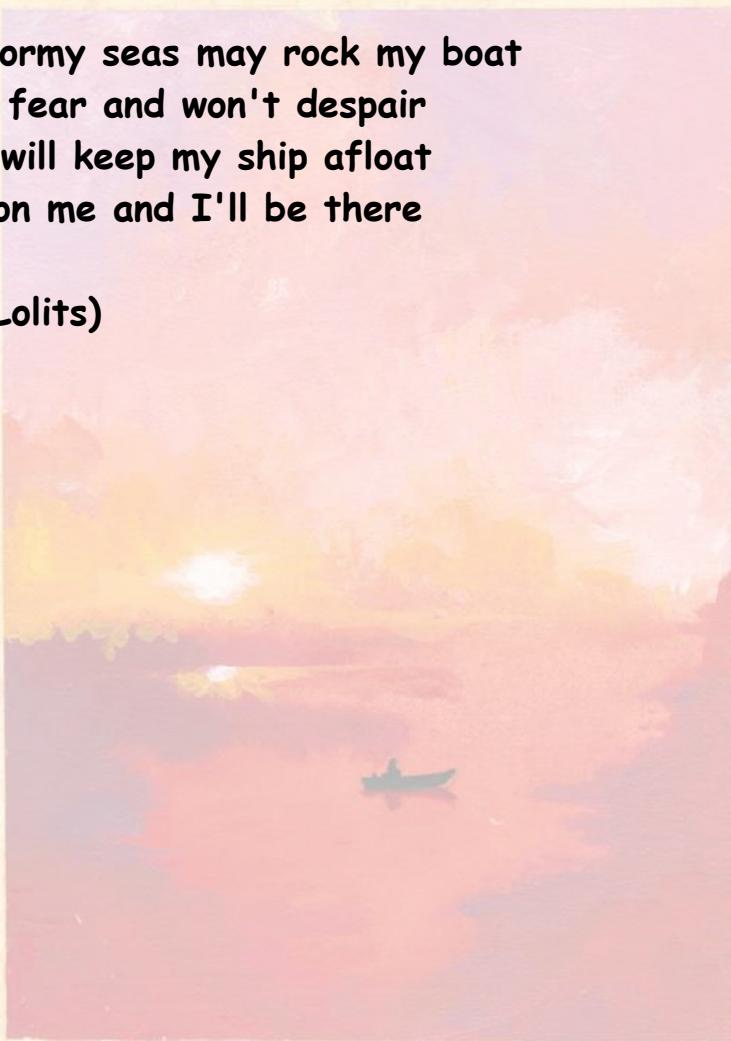
Dearest Richie,

Son,

**You are the wheel that keeps me going
The shelter in the storm of life
My love for you is ever growing
You are the reason I'm alive**

**Though stormy seas may rock my boat
I have no fear and won't despair
Your love will keep my ship afloat
Just call on me and I'll be there**

Mommie (Lolits)



To Jun Abaigar,

You have been a pillar
A nourishment in my life
My powerful buffer
The notes in the musical sheet of my life
You are the blood in my life's vein
Taking away life's pain
You are the anchor from which I draw strength
And I thank the Heavens
Each day I thank the Heavens above
That I found you
For giving me YOU, a gift of love
'Cause you have made a big difference in my life.

Lolit

Dearest Grace,

Ano na kita Ne? I am looking forward to seeing you again in December and hope you can spend more time with me this time around. I appreciate our friendship for 33 years and it is unbelievable to think that we have never lost touch with each other. You are a true friend indeed and I thank the One up Above for giving you to me. Thanks for being a friend in the truest sense, and for enriching my life with your friendship...Lolit

To Mel Payawal (my sister in Christ & friend for only a year)

I thank the Lord for having found you just recently in my life. It was a discovery of another human being with whom one's relationship has progressed day by day with a glowing depth, beauty and joy and i hope this will continue as the months and years go by. I did not look for it and neither did I passionately wish for it. It was a sort of Divine accident...Lolit

To my dearest Tita Nellie,

You are heaven-sent to us. Thank you for just being you and for being there all the time when we need you. How lucky we all are the Armeñas and the Ramoses to have you for an aunt. No one can equal you! Your friendship is priceless and your love is a real treasure.

Your niece,
Lolit

Dearest Mommie,

You have been the best Mom ever and I thank you for everything that you have taught us and given us in this life. I am where I am now because of you. I thank you for your patience and for bearing with us in good times but especially in bad times. You are a true model of motherhood...Lolit

Dearest Dad,

I dreamt of you a month ago and the vision I saw was heavenly. I know that where you are, you are at peace and happy. Know that wherever you are right now, I am with you. As Richie has said often enough, you are our HERO. Three cheers to you!
... Lolit

Dearest Vi,

Si Manay Lilit baga ini. Ang question daa Ne is not why God gave you to me but rather How did God know that I will be so happy to have a friend like you ... Manay Lilit

To my cousin Emry Armeña Dimayuga (HS Class 65)

Friendship cannot be permanent unless it becomes spiritual. There must be fellowship in the deepest things of the soul.... Hugh Black ... Lolits

To Girlie Rivera del Prado (my friend of 38 years - STC Class '67)

May the wings of our Friendship never moult a feather Charles Dickens ... Lolit



To Mary Munoz

MOTHER
by Pat McKay

You are a strong lady,
with kind eyes.
you have prayed and
given love to many
people.

Much of my strength
comes from the knowledge
and respect
you have poured into
my life.

You have built
a bridge of faith
between your life and mine.

You have taught
me to face
a real world
remembering
to be strong
and
yet gentle.

Your service to life
is a great example
and I am proud
you
are my mother.

With all my love and esteem,
Alexis Munoz Dasig

Dearest Maya, Marcia, Michael, JB and
Hansel,

*"I wish for you
To have love all around, your whole life long,
I wish for your days to be filled with laughter,
Kind words and joyful songs,
I wish for you to have beautiful new things
To happen to you each new day...
I wish for your every choice
To lead you to the most blessed way,
And I wish you strength for days as
Difficult as they may seem,
For steady courage to go on
And grace to fulfill your dreams."*

Maya,

Bong submitted this but I took the liberty of
borrowing it to send to you. Thanks a lot for
the 6 original pieces of art you created for our
Friendship Book.

Love,
Tita Ting

Dearest Hil, Ren and Ger,

Looking forward to seeing you again.

Love,
Ting

February 24, 2005

I am sending all my love to my sons Chris and Alex, to Mama, to Mary Jane and Sonny, to Bebot, Hazel, Jobert and Jencelle, to Nene, Cathy, Chrys, Lito and Delia, to my brothers-in law and my nephews and nieces.....to all of you, my deepest gratitude for the support you have given me freely thru the years.

All my love to Ditas, Judith, Totie, Gwen, Nels, Ting, Fe Tablizo, Susan Arboleda, Gladys Gregorio, Jessie Ty, Erlinda Jimenez Boral and Lilian Marmol. Thanks for calling and visiting.

I am sending my love to Class 67 and to my classmates and friends in Legaspi who took the time to write me. I still keep your letter Gregoria Goyena Imperial, Rebecca Magalona, Melba Mercado, Nancy Layson, Salvacion Garcia, Lerna Arcangel, Theresa Balse, Eden Barrios and Concepcion Aspanano.

All my love,

Tess Prieto
HS Class '67

GOD BLESS YOU

I seek in prayerful words, dear friend,
My heart's true wish to send you,
That you may know that, far or near,
My loving thoughts attend you.

I cannot find a truer word,
Nor better to address you;
Nor song, nor poem have I heard
Is sweeter than God bless you!

God bless you! So I've wished you all
Of brightness life possesses;
For can there any joy at all
Be yours unless God blesses?

God bless you! So I breathe a charm
Lest grief's dark night oppress you,
For how can sorrow bring you harm
If 'tis God's way to bless you?

And so, "through all the days
May shadows touch thee never-"
But this alone -God bless thee -
Then art thou safe forever.

--author unknown

Submitted by Bong

Dearest Tessie,

Just want you to know that I think of you and miss you.

God be with you.

Love & kisses,
Susan Arboleda Rutiaga

THE WONDERFUL WOMEN IN MY CIRCLE!!

(Author unknown)

When I was little, I use to believe in the concept of one best friend, and then I started to become a woman. And then I found out that if you allow your heart to open up, God will show you the best in many friends.

One friend's best is needed when you're going through things with your man.

Another friend's best is needed when you're going through things with your Mother.

Another when you want to shop, share, heal, hurt, joke, or just be.

One friend will say let's pray together, another let's cry together, another let's fight together, another let's walk away together...

One friend will meet your spiritual need, another your shoe fetish, another your love for movies, another will be with you in your season of confusion, another will be your clarifier, another the wind beneath your wings...

But whatever their assignment in your life, on whatever the occasion, on whatever the day, or where ever you need them to meet you with their gym shoes on and hair pulled back or to hold you back from making a complete fool of yourself... those are your best friends.

It may all be wrapped up in one woman, but for many it's wrapped up in several... one from 7th grade, one from high school, several from the college years, a couple from old jobs, several from church, on some days your mother, on others your sisters, and on some days it's the one that you needed just for that day or week that you needed someone with a fresh perspective, or the one who didn't know all your baggage, or the one who would just listen without judging... those are good girlfriends/bestfriends..

Men are wonderful, husbands are excellent, boyfriends are awesome, male friends are priceless... but if you've ever had a real good girlfriend, then you know there's nothing like her! I thank God for girlfriends, those who honor intimacy, those who hold trust, and those who cover your back when you feel like life is just too heavy!

I thank God for you. The special bond we share, that's unique to us. The words we've shared. The prayers we've sent up. The laughs, the tears, the phone calls, the emails, the shopping, the movies, the lunches, the dinners, the late night talks, afternoon talks, the weekend talks, all the talking, talking, talking and the listening, listening, listening...

So whether you've been there 20 minutes or 20 years, I love you!

Submitted by Jing Lomeda Valenciano

With strong AGNESIAN SPIRIT, a root from the Benedictine teachings, we send you all our friends a very big hug. A very special mention to Class' 49 and Class' 50 .

We've never forgotten our Alma Mater and the friends we left behind and no doubt what we learned in those beautiful grounds have helped us Agnesians to be successful in life.

We are several Agnesians in Spain too and when we get together we all feel young as ever.

Years go by very fast yet we don't feel old. Take it from us, you younger batch, the secret lies in the oxygen we've inhaled in St, Agnes Academy and the education we received from all the wonderful, sweet and very strict Benedictine Sisters.

(Of course the "lada" in the pinangat also helped.)

MABUHAY ST.AGNES ACADEMY! MABUHAY THE SISTERS AND TEACHERS! AND MABUHAY ALL AGNESIANS IN ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD!!

We send you our love and greetings,

**MARIA ELENA "Marilen" Achaval Class' 49
CARMEN "Carmina" Muñoz Class '50**

PS: Thank you Tamen for informing us about the Friendship book.

My warmest greetings to the Golden Jubilarians Class' 55 - and a big hug for each and everyone of my classmates. I belong to Class' 53. I do hope you still remember me.

A special hug for Monse Celis Semenchuk and Nellie Armeña. .

Also, I would like to know if anyone heard from Nena Balibrea class' 54, I think. If so, tell her we remember her and to get in touch with her dear friends.

From Spain I wish you all the best in everything.

Love,
Isabel Muñoz, Class' 53

Dearest Amy,

You were like a breath of fresh air that blew into my life last reunion. You brought back happy memories of my childhood such as the "biriran" tree, and the other big trees we shared in common as childhood neighbors. The trees are gone now but we are still here. I like that.

Love,
Alexis

From: **Angela Morato**
Date: Mar 7, 2005 11:52 PM
Subject: Will you come to Legazpi

Dearest **Manay Tamen**,

I don't know if you have heard from the Gonzales sisters but here's an update. Their brother, Fernando Gonzales, is now the Governor of Albay and his wife, Linda Gonzales, is now the Mayor of Ligao City. The Secretary to the Mayor of Ligao is Jeresha Meneses, SAA HS71.

Here's one for the friendship book...

My mother, Luz Garcia, who was a teacher, was asked to tutor PG, Trinita, and the Gonzales boys. She said that Trinita was prim and proper and would sit quietly and do her assignments and so did the boys. But....PG would fidget and would try all her charms on my mother. She would say, "Mrs. Luz, no quiero estudiar, quiero jugar" "Mrs. Luz, quiero comer" "Mrs. Luz, quiero usar el bano", "Mrs. Luz, quiero dormir". HAHAHA My mom would recall this so lovingly of her dear PG.

Luz Angela Garcia-Morato HS71

From: **Josefa Fernandez**
Date: Mar 8, 2005 11:19 AM
Subject: [SAA-PI] Re: For Angela Morato

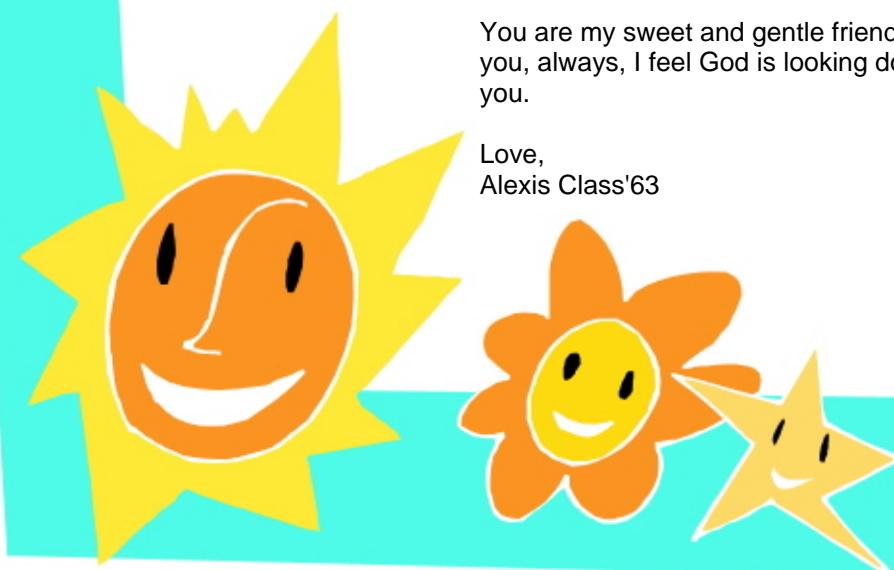
Hi Angela. This is to specially thank you for the warm and funny story about me and your dear mother, Mrs. Luz, as I used to call her. I too recall her lovingly and with much gratitude for putting up so lovingly with me. There are some great saints that we grew up with, and one of them is Mrs. Luz, as we affectionately called her.

May God bless you always.
PG (Gonzalez) Fernandez

Dearest **PG**,

You are my sweet and gentle friend. When I think of you, always, I feel God is looking down and smiling at you.

Love,
Alexis Class'63



Date: Mar 8, 2005 11:29 AM

God sent me a great blessing through Roderick Salazar. (now Fr. Roderick). He was such a good example in and out of classes. Since I was quite the opposite, Sr. Louis made me sit beside him in class for a while to settle me down. It should have been embarrassing for me since the girls were not allowed to sit beside the boys. But there I was, beside Roderick. This didn't seem to faze me at all, and I rather enjoyed it. After all, he was the valedictorian, and I felt real proud that I had been made to sit beside him. I thought of myself as the salutatorian!! Thanks, Fr. Rod and SAA 63 for the greatest times of my life.

From PG Gonzalez Fernandez

my dear beni, jessie, leni, sr. B,

too bad you cannot make it to the balik ogma and homecoming. i will truly miss you, and i will really chismiss you.

mwah.....totie

dear chi, chu, etta, jeannie, joy and susan,

what made us friends in the elementary grade when we first met?

well, i think i know;

the best in me and the best in you
hailed each other because they knew
that always and always since life began
our being friends was part of God's plan.

your friend forever,
totie balce

BALIK OGMA and THE FRIENDSHIP BOOK are the product and creation of a CIRCLE OF FRIENDS made up of Agnesians who truly care for each other. we wanted all agnesians to feel the love that's uniquely ours so we brought BALIK OGMA and leave the love fest with beautiful memories to warm our hearts for years and years to come....memories that would make us smile, laugh, and cry with joy until it is time to meet again!

Jing Lomeda Valenciano

Dearest Lolits,

After forty years, I found you again during our Ruby Jubilee. I regret that during that time, we did not have the opportunity to bond more. I am glad that you write often. This way I feel you are just around the corner.

Love,

Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

Dearest Ner,

I see that in spite of your recent loss and your recent trip to the Philippines, you are still making the effort to come home once again to join the SAA reunion of 2005, and be with your friends. A great effort on your part Ner. The reunion will not be the same without you.

Love, Alexis Munoz Dasig HS Class '63

You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what's life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's life can't help being something of a mess, with all this trapping and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life of trifle. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little bit of that.

Charlotte, "Charlotte's Web"
by E.B. White



Submitted by Alexis Munoz Dasig

Spread some Friendship
Gather some Love.
Submitted by Bong

A true friend is a treasure of the heart.
Submitted by Bong

GOOD FOOD
GOOD MEAT
GOOD FRIENDS
LET'S EAT!
Written on a "tadtaran"
Submitted by Bong

Neria Nidea Soliman's 'Friendly' Recipe

FABADA is a Spanish gourmet dish which I consider very versatile and 'friendly'. Friendly in the sense that it taste good and can be eaten with varied accompaniments, rice, potato, breads such as pocket bread as filling, ala king breads, crackers and biscuits as topping, filling for vol-au-vent casings etc.. This dish is most friendly indeed! It can be served as appetizer, entrée, and main dish depending on the presentation and amount of serving.

Below is my own concoction of a Fabada Recipe hence the title

NER'S 'FADABA' DELIGHT (note letter D before letter B - fadaba from the word 'PADABA' meaning 'MY BELOVED' PINANGATUGANGS!)

1 cup glutinous meat stuff like beef canilla, pork hocks or pressure cooked to soften ham skin leat overs
1 kilo white kidney beans
6 pcs Chorizo de Bilbao
1 pc Chabai (a 6 inch hot Hungarian sausage) or any exotic sausages, Vienna sausage is another substitute but least recommended.
1/2 cup chopped bacon
1 tin tomato paste
1 tsp saffron powder
olive oil
Garlic
Onion
Salt to taste

Procedure:

Wash the beans and soak overnight

Boil beans with water to cover in a thick pot and let boil for 30 minutes.

Remove dirt that appears in the surface

Prepare other ingredients: slice the sausages and the meats. Chopped very finely the glutinous meat specially the ham skin

Boil beans again changing the water, enough to cover

In a separate pan sauté garlic, onion and all the meats. Add tomato paste and saffron powder.

Boil the beans for the 3rd time, changing the water once again for another 20 minutes.

Change the water for the 4th time. This time add a little more water to cover. Let boil and add the sautéed meats.

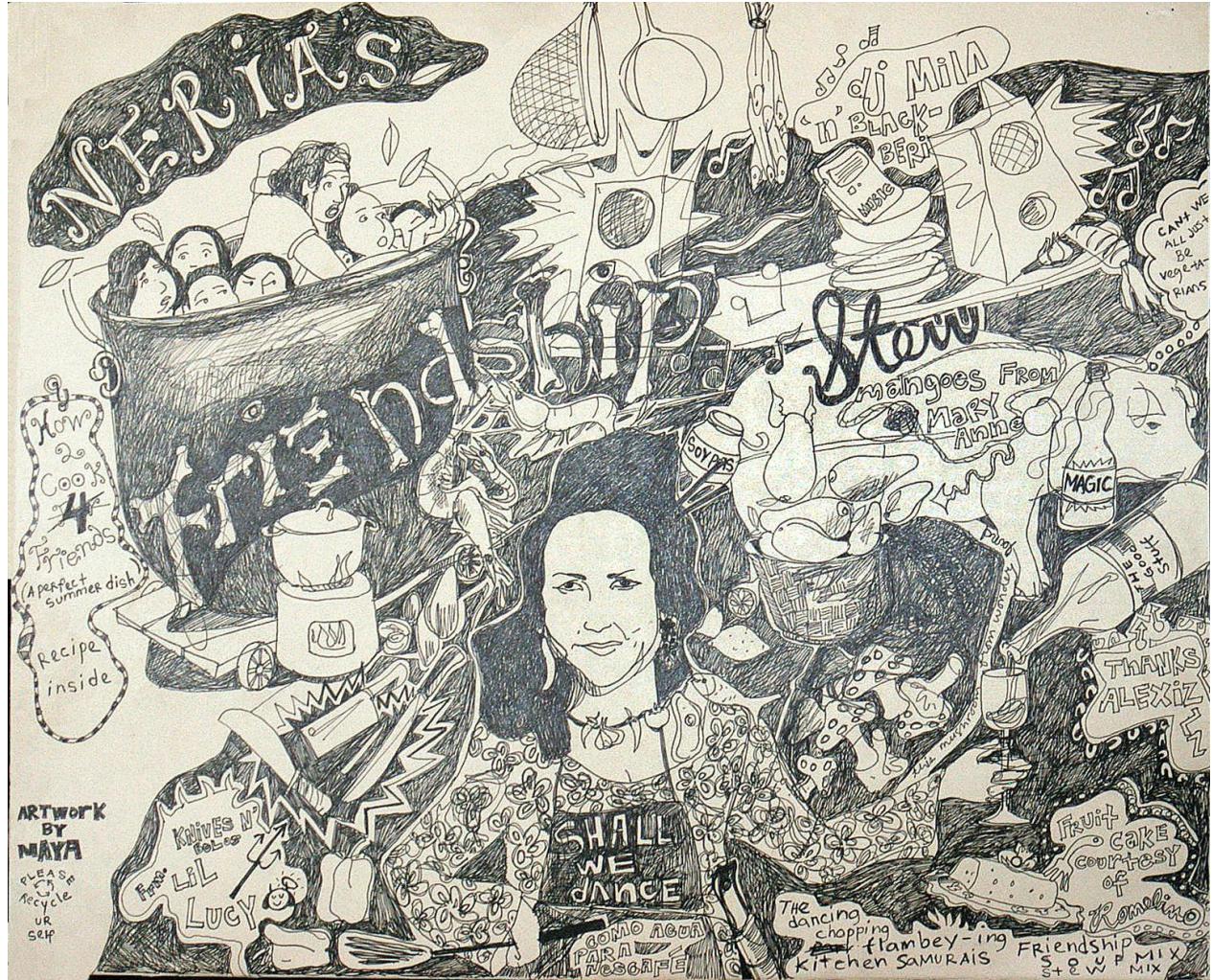
Do not stir. Just shake the cooking pot so as not to disturb the beans

The glutinous meat will thicken the consistency or if prefer to a more thicker sauce puree some of the beans and add to mixture

Allow to simmer.

When oil is visible at the surface, the recipe is ready to be served.

Serve hot with any of the accompaniments mentioned above.



“Neria’s friendship stew”

FRIENDSHIP IS:

AGNES CABREDO, setting my hair, guided only by a flashlight and with hairpins clenched between her teeth, worked the rollers on my waist-long hair straight as a rod while all around us our dorm mates slept and hey, there's an exam tomorrow!

MILA ALVAREZ typing my term paper till the wee hours of the morning as she struggled to decipher my atrocious handwriting on a manual typewriter (mind you, the PC was not invented yet!). Thank God at a young age there was no such thing as cataract.

ALEXIS MUÑOZ ministering solicitously to my infected eye all the way to Punta Fuego in Nasugbu, Batangas and that after hosing down the dog poo from my shoes after a visit to a Tagaytay resthouse. Such kindness is never forgotten.

JOY ALVARADO inviting me to her town fiesta in Bacacay when we were in junior high at St. Agnes. I felt important and honored that she should single me out for this invitation. We took the bus and when we reached her place I thought how beautiful was the architecture of her ancestral home and all around me the exhilaration in the air was palpable, the endless helpings of food, the animated guests, the colorful buntongs, the general bonhomie around us. When I remind her now about it, sadly she has forgotten, but a grateful heart does not easily forget!

LENI AYCARDO taking her high schoolmates to her place where the most unforgettable halo-halo was served. I still can hear the clink of the kutchara against the glass as we twirled the rainbow combination of ube, mais, langka, mongo and leche flan against the swirl of crushed ice. And friendship came to the fore when some of us asked for an extra helping of sugar, milk or ice and Leni generously poured them, when mother was not looking.

Bong Arevalo Medrano

For me, Friendship is:

- ♥ visiting Alexis Munoz-Dasig at her Escalon, California house, eating, watching DVDs and talking endlessly about all our former classmates. Tsismis, in other words.
- ♥ Mila Alvarez-Magno, enlightening us with her iPod technology and gifting us with instant CD copies of digital photos.
- ♥ sharing Joy Alvarado's Tagaytay house and being served a five-star breakfast.
- ♥ talking way past midnight with Amy Achacon-Antflek, having shared the same room at Mary Ann's house.
- ♥ Ner Nidea-Soliman's self expression of her dancing skills, and showing us outfits that belied our "advanced" age.
- ♥ finding Loulie Lapuz-Balcueva and feeling disappointed that she had had her wonderful mole removed! Her having also been a fellow "interna" and classmate.
- ♥ spending time with Mita Moll-Belleza in her time of grief, and rediscovering the courage of her infectious laughter.
- ♥ talking to Maricoi Garchitorena-Sutton, reminiscing about our "interna" days and her life in Alabama.
- ♥ Lolit Ramos-Mercado's fun-filled birthday event in 2003, which was really our first reunion celebration.
- ♥ having Nonong Gojo always on hand for get-togethers, and staying up until everyone is safely home.
- ♥ Fr. Roderick Salazar's prayers for each of us in spite of his hectic schedule.
- ♥ visiting Tita Duran-Paredes at her Antioch, California home and helping her locate long lost classmate Monching Salazar.

And for all my other classmates and friends whom I have failed to mention, they will fill a new page in my book of friendship memories.

Cecile Manalac

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship needs no studied phrases,
Polished face, or winning wiles;
Friendship deals no lavish praises,
Friendship dons no surface smiles.

Friendship follows Nature's diction,
Shuns the blandishments of Art,
Boldly severs truth from fiction,
Speaks the language of the heart.

Friendship favors no condition,
Scorns a narrow-minded creed,
Lovingly fulfills its mission,
Be it word or be it deed.

Friendship cheers the faint and weary,
Makes the timid spirit brave,
Warns the erring, lights the dreary,
Smooths the passage to the grave.

Friendship - pure, unselfish friendship,
All through life's allotted span,
Nurtures, strengthens, widens, lengthens,
Man's relationship with man.

author unknown

Submitted by Bong & Jing

FRIENDSHIP PRAYER

God bless our friendship...
our days spent together.

You're a friend
who I pray will
be with me...forever.

Thanks for our
memories, our
good times and fun.

Have faith that
God's blessings
have just begun.

Submitted by Bong

Excerpts from Making of Book

From: Mila Magno
Date: Feb 7, 2005 1:10 AM
Subject: [SAA63] I AM RESIGNING!

Hello, dear pinangatugangs...

Surprised? Well, don't be. I just wanted to capture your attention (I couldn't imagine myself being out of the "family"). And now that I have your attention, may I ask you to please support us in the creation of the "Friendship Book" which will be distributed sometime before the annual SAA Reunion festivities in Legazpi.

The book's general outline is published in our website...

> **A Munoz** wrote: hi everyone, this is a reminder regarding the friendship book we are preparing > to be distributed just before the saa grand reunion in may 2005.

WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME. please send your entries

> **bonita a medrano** wrote:

My dear Alexis, santelmo, my friend, don't despair I will send you some take on friendship in whatever form: prose poetry limerick haiku nursery rhyme whatever. Just remember this line from elementary days, "Long long ago in an oak, I found the arrow still unbroken, and my song from beginning to end, I found it in the heart of a friend". BONG

> **alexis** wrote: you are right Bong. I am in despair!!!!...but that arrow poem has consoled me. we should include that in our friendship book. the other day Mila and I were brainstorming with Chita who happens to be in California. she is leaving for Manila today. Mila said not to fret because we can make this book happen. i believe her of course.

yes Bong. aside from the article you will write as a featured writer, do send your prose, your poetry, your limerick, your haiku, your nursery rhyme, the song in your heart that is yet to be sang ... stupid or sublime, funny or sad ... but pray, make them attention grabbing, mind boggling, tear jerking, life changing pieces ... "now, where was i? Got carried away ..." (a direct quote from you.) god, Bong. that arrow poem is beautiful! Send that to the fun pages for me ... alexis

> **Chita Vallejo Pijano** wrote: Hello, folks,

Am back home and reality bites! Am drowning in work but this is normal.

I called Sr. Consillo, the HS principal of St. Agnes. I faxed the guidelines to her and wrote a new deadline so we should have the entries by mid Feb. I asked for the 10 best essays and I will try to follow up by the 1st week of Feb.

Times goes real fast and soon it will be Feb but I promise to stay on top of this so you can all relax a bit and take care of the other sections.

I haven't called Bong or Cecille yet but will do so maybe this weekend.

Back to the salt mines. Till next mail.

From: rrgsfo@aol.com
To: SAA-PI@yahoogroups.com,inangat@yahoogroups.com,
Date: Feb 7, 2005 4:12 PM
Subject: [Pinangat] Re: [SAA-PI] I AM QUITTING!

If I'll be the only Contributor to the 'Friendship Book',
---- I QUIT!!!
GGGRRRGGGG!

From: cathorbigo
To: SAA-PI@yahoogroups.com
Date: Feb 10, 2005 5:09 AM
Subject: RE: [SAA-PI] I AM QUITTING!

Tito Romy and Tita Mila,

Don't QUIT! I will share some few pieces, the deadline is still 2 weeks from now, aram mo naman kita, mas matibay at napipiga pag nagcramming! Besides if you do resign, wow, sayang naman what you have shared with all of us....we enjoy your shared memories, they are so true, and we are truly blessed to reminisce all that through your humorous sharings.

Regards and hope to send mine soon...
Cathy

> **Bong A Medrano** wrote: Knock Knock who's there? This is Bong trying to get into the netherworld of the Friendship Book. Hello, is anybody there, wala, nada, nil, nobody answers. Anyway, in answer to Alexis's "cri de couer" I am sending bits and pieces on Friendship memorized from books, filched from stores, graffiti and toilet wall scribblings (complete with magnifying glass, say mo Sherlock Holmes?), culled from proverbs, sayings, Irish Blessings and the Bible even, pati na mga calendars hindi ko pinatawad! The haikus, limericks are still to be written but may never reach the deadline, the song Alexis is waiting for has yet to be sung but never mind, Fr. Rod can belt out "Amigos Para Siempre" (which by the way, I suggest you can include some of the stirring lyrics into the book).

> **Mila** wrote: alexis, I have so many messages. It will be faster getting everything from you by phone. What about 7pm your time?

> **Alexis** wrote: hi Mila, is 7:30 pm my time too late for you? If it is, let me know and I will make sure I am home at 7 ... talk to you later ... alexis

> **Mila** wrote: 7:30 is fine alexis. but don't rush on account of me. we can also talk tomorrow, friday ... mila

> **A Munoz** wrote: hi Maya, i am getting anxious about art work. re-assure me that your art works will get to Mila on time. you did get my email about how many art work you need to do, yes? answer. ..tita ting

> **Maya Munoz** wrote: i have to do art work?

hehehe

> **Maya Munoz** wrote: okay okay okay, in five days i send. i just got back and creatively tapped out. let me rest and think now about my entries and the cover. k, i did not forget.

From: **Maya Munoz**

To: Magno, Mila

Sent: Sat Feb 05 07:02:48 2005

Subject: RE: Website and Friendship Book

guys! this book !!!!! don't know what to say about THE BOOK! IAM POSTPONING MY SHOW SO I CAN DO TITA TINGS SKETCHES! but its ok. i am trying to do the sketches in between the paintings. i thought i was going to do little ones only to find out ... soon as i did them little ones that i am a size queen and i have to do full size. any ways, i am taking a break right now. okay, by the end of this, i should get a rough idea of what the front cover should look like!!!! don't worry but pray!!!! hehehe

> **bonita a medrano** wrote:

> Alexis, my suggestion here as to the artwork is just a sample of a page torn
> from a slum book (or an older/earlier vintage: the Autograph book), the sight
> of which would set readers into a nostalgic mode, not entire pages containing
> each and every contributor's (as you put it) "human demographics", heaven
> help us esp. when it comes to the weight!).

> **A Munoz** wrote:

hi Bong and Maya, that's right Bong. i forgot all about those human demographics that were part and parcel of the slum book. height and weight!!! god forbid. it seems like it is the eleventh hour. if we don't get anymore contributions for this section, i think, as it is, this section can fly.

>**bonita a medrano** wrote:Hello Alexis, I don't know if Maya has any idea how a slum book and its contents look like being way beyond our generation, it would have been nice if we can have a sample in existence so we can reproduce it in our friendship book for this particular page, if not we can have a "fun" sample made for our artwork. If I remember right, it contained : NAME, ADDRESS, AGE, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, FAVORITE SUBJECT, FAVORITE FLOWER, FAVORITE PHRASE OR MOTTO (and here is where the cliche comes in), PET PEEVE, etc. Remember some more? This could be a good way to present the artwork (just a suggestion) - bong

Quoting A Munoz :

- > hi Bong, my thoughts. i told Mila, that even with what we have now, that section will fly. problem with slum book is that nobody seems to have any sample of it. it seems none survived the typhoons and what have you in albay.
- > i will forward your email to Maya.
- > Bong, your email, again, is at the bottom of the pile. i don't mind. rather,
- > it has become more exciting for me. if there is one more email i cannot see immediately, then i know it is you wanting to be unearthed somewhere.
- > thanks for your feedback. that is friendship in action.....alexis

Maya Munoz wrote:

I am afraid i dont have much ideas for the slum book other than what we discussed on the phone. I am gaining momentum on the four/5 drawing iam sending you, worked on front and back today, will be done by tonite and tomorrow the other two. i decided to make them full size and with color cuz all my materials tend to go towards larger size pieces. coming along really nicely. i already spoke to the photographer so he will shoot and color correct and burn to cd by tomorrow nite.

>**Bong** wrote: I'll send a couple of more additions to the FRIENDSHIP IS... (in fact, I urged Cecile to start that coconut working and contribute to this. She promised with the coconut trees swaying above her in Boracay, she might be inspired to come up yet with her obra maestra

before I proceed, let me just tell you a tale that would make you understand once more what friendship is. My travails with my computer crash did not end with it, well, bogging down. Like I mentioned, I had to use the services of an internet café so I can continue to interact with you guys and amidst that din of the falsetto singing of April Boy over the radio (this was really driving me nuts!), the shouting of the internet café staff (why can't they tone down their voices?), the jostling of elbows with other users, the hothouse atmosphere as the one and only air conditioner shook, vibrated and fought hard to keep us from stripping off our clothes, and with perspiration pouring down my glasses and blurring my already threatened vision, I battled valiantly to type all of this PART 2 via internet and, as I triumphantly neared the end, PING!?! the screen went blank, the entire document vanished, lost, gone with the wind. A staff tried desperately to retrieve it, but to no avail, it reminded me of a patient in ER wherein a team of doctors try to revive the dead patient but in vain. The struggle over, I went home drained. After all that effort, it came to naught. And you know what? I bought several sticks of banana cue and vent all my frustrations and sorrows on those hapless sticks!

Hehehey, you guys! Thanks for humoring us. You outdid yourselves with your contributions to the Friendship Book. We planned for eighty pages and by a hair, you doubled the volume! You are all a gem and so are your articles.

Bong (Arevalo Medrano): You practically shaped the book with your computer travails and your nuggets. "Peleeez," bring your magnifying glass everywhere you go, be on the lookout for those toilet wall scribbles and give that computer of yours a good kick for the next issue. Jussst kidding!

Chita (Vallejo Pijano): You made it happen (the SAA High School essay writing contest)! It pays to have a friend in high places. You are a true friend...of God.

Jing (Lomeda Valenciano): Thanks for listening to our ideas and for cheering us on.

Nenette (Zapanta Lee): It is great to have a writer at hand. The letters you wrote, the cost quotations you got, they came fast and furious. You are faster than our IT Department and twice as efficient. Now we know where to go for results.

Tamen (Pardo Muñoz): You are the Manager of the Universe, or how about just Campaign Manager? Your efforts kept the articles coming. Totie (Balce) you campaigned too. Shall we call you the Assistant to the Manager?

Susan (Arboleda Rutiaga): Thanks a Bill-ion, a blast from our past, for your extensive contribution to the slum book section.

Romie (Gojo): You have a knack for tweaking our brains to remember, to feel light-hearted again. "Thanks, hum, hum, hum, for the memories...Tra la la la la."

And finally to you **Maya (Muñoz):** what can we say? How about hugs and kisses for staying up late to finish the artwork? Your art pieces began to arrive via computer just as our energy reached its lowest ebb.....and you got us all excited again. Whaaat? No hugs and kisses for you? Then let us just say, THANKS!!!

Love,

Mila Alvarez Magno, Class '63 and
Alexis Munoz Dasig, Class '63



To Alexis,

"Don't be dismayed at goodbyes. A farewell is necessary before you can meet again. And meeting again, after moments or lifetimes, is certain for those who are friends."

Mila

On Friendship

COMMUNITY

We are all longing to go home
to some place we have never been -
a place half-remembered, half-envisioned
we can only catch glimpses of from time to time.
Community.

Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion
Without having the words to catch in our throats.
Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us.
Eyes will light up as we enter.
Voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our power.
Community means strength that joins our strength
To do the work that needs to be done;
Arms to hold us when we falter;
A circle of healing;
A circle of friends
Someplace where we can be ourselves together.

Starhawk

Submitted by Fr. Rod Salazar, SVD